Vignettes from Finland

A. M. Clive-Bayley

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Mr. Charles Cockerell,
in remembrance of a
memorable holiday,
from W. Henry Maxfield.

July – August, 1908.

A FINNISH PEASANT.

VIGNETTES FROM FINLAND

OR

TWELVE MONTHS IN STRAWBERRY LAND

BY

A. M. C. CLIVE-BAYLEY

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UPB

In Loving and Grateful Memory

OF

MADAME ANNE ELIZABETH DE FURUHJELM,

NÉE DE SCHULTZ,

WHO DIED SUDDENLY, AT HELSINGFORS,

DECEMBER, 1894.

NOTE.

THE following pages are chiefly taken from letters written to friends and relatives during the year I was in Finland. The happy memories of that year are clouded by the loss of the friend with whose daughter I travelled during the first six months of my stay in Strawberry Land. I returned to Hongola from time to time, but after Easter, 1894, I was chiefly at Borgå, or travelling with my other friend, the wife of Pastor Neovius. The Pastor is well known as the collector of Paraske's Runos, and both as an antiquarian and as a patriot he will, for this labour of love, receive the gratitude of later generations.

It was in a similar way that the celebrated Lönrot collected the Epic poem known as the 'Kalevala.' He jotted down the fragmentary

songs of the people, noting their sequence, and though there seem to be many *lacunæ* in it still, the deeds of Wainominen, the True and Ancient, are chronicled in the most musical of tongues, and the most poetic of languages.

A. M. C.-B.

April, 1895.

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VIGNETTES FROM FINLAND;

OR,

TWELVE MONTHS IN STRAWBERRY LAND.

"My Land is Strawberry Land; the Stranger's Land is Bilberry Land." "One's own is always best."—*Finnish Proverbs.*

CHAPTER I.

ARRIVAL.

"WHY!" exclaimed the old woman, as she poked her stick through a chink in the fence, "there is a world on that side too!"

And what a beautiful world it is, in this quaint land of proverb and folk-lore, of snow and ice, forest and lake, of Svêkoman and Finoman, of high literary culture and unsophisticated peasant life!

The flags and illuminations in honour of the Duke of York's marriage were still brightening the

London streets; millions of sightseers were yet crowding its thoroughfares when I bade farewell to my friends at home, and started for Hull.

On July 12th, 1893, the *Urania* lay waiting for a pilot, outside the narrow channel which winds among the islands of the Northern Archipelago, off the coast of Finland. In the clear moonlight, reefs and rocky islets, bare and small, stood out dark and sombre, like shadows in the shadowless northern night.

About one, as the dawn broke, we glided slowly forward. Round the horizon a broad rainbow of colour belted the sky, bright in pink, yellow, and green, the violet and blue of the sea adding to the hues of sunrise. We moved almost imperceptibly forward among the small rugged rocks, which still looked black in the grey light around us. A yacht, with sails full set, lay floating in the dead calm. There was not a ripple on the water, nor any sound save that of our own motion. Here and there stood a lighthouse or signal-tower, and white cairns seemed to mark specially dangerous or fatal reefs. No trees, but only whin and low bushes, covered the islets.

About three we came to, and lay again off a pilot-station.

Hitherto the journey had seemed perilous enough, and would certainly have been so in storm or fog. The channel was very narrow, though distinctly marked by tall, painted iron rods, standing at this calm season high out of the water. These, by the variation in the position of the colours, indicated the depth. But beyond the channel the shallows lay like light upon the water. There were no large breakers or lines of surf, only here and there a tiny dimple in the sea, where a curvetting wave, with foam riding birdlike on its crest, marked a hidden rock.

Soon after changing pilots, we came among the larger islands, which seemed to increase in size as we neared land. They were rich in tall timber, some of the firs rising in faultless spires above the forests, while others showed like ragged masts against the sky, and spoke of wind and tempest. Rushes fringed the islands now and again with a dash of exquisite verdure, but in the grey light the colour of the forests seemed sombre, though here

and there relieved by the delicate hues of the silver birch.

Suddenly we changed our course a little, and the sun caught some of the yellows and greys of what I suppose are sand, limestone, and granite rocks, and gilded them with a perfect halo of light. The channel, too, opened out, and the reaches of water between the larger islands were very beautiful. Wooden huts, rich in red, showed here and there among the trees, and now and again a little craft, poised motionless as a bird with folded wings, appeared in the bend of a bay, or close to the shore of some islet.

A few of the islands stood out high and precipitous, almost as though they were fortified. It is, at all events, a charming entrance to the empire which stretches eastwards to the further shore of Asia.

Our wait in the deep gloom of night at the rock-guarded portals might be made into a poetic simile flattering to the Czar of All the Russias. No doubt an enthusiastic Russophil would believe that the dawn of light which heralded our entrance into these dominions is but symbolic of the glorious

enlightenment which prevails beneath the rule of the mighty Father of his people!

Not less lovely was the scene as I came on deck, and exchanged a few words with my fellow-passengers. We could not talk, except to say. "How lovely," and "How cold," for the Swedish or Finnish passengers who were on deck before me spoke no language but their own, and I had no knowledge of Swedish. The morning was lovely, but piercingly cold—a cold not to be forgotten for many a long month in Central Finland.

By-and-bye other passengers appeared, some who spoke French, and two Englishmen who were travelling on business, and we had some hot coffee and tea to warm us. The islands had many châlets and picturesque houses upon them, as we neared Åbo, and looked very dainty and fresh in the early morning. Though the entrance to the harbour is pretty, and the hill behind Abo is woody, the actual landing-place has no particular charm. Right in front of us was the castle of Åbo, which is certainly historic, but not beautiful.

It was amusing to watch the passengers disembarking, and I was much interested in the

account the captain gave of the emigrants. Some of them were now penniless, having returned to the land without the rich harvest they hoped to have gathered for the winter's use. There is in America a large and very thriving colony of Finns, and any

CASTLE OF ÅBO.

land would be enriched by their patient endurance, industry, and resource. But it does seem a pity that a land of 144,000 square miles should part with any of its 2,770,000 sturdy workers.

The scene before me was exceedingly entertaining, for every man, woman, and child seemed

to have indulged in the most wonderful headgear imaginable. The modest kerchief of the peasant girls I saw in the lanes beyond, had, by the women emigrants, been exchanged for Tower-of-Babel erections, lost in a very wilderness of flowers, which certainly never grew in any terrestrial garden. Most

ÅBO FROM LANDING-PLACE.

of the boys and men had brilliant felt hats of every possible colour.

But I was soon away from the ship in a drosky which the ever-present telephone of enlightened Finland summoned from the town, and I, and a friend who met me, went at a rattling pace over the cobbles of the quaint, wood-built city. The

names of the streets were indicated in Russian, Swedish, and Finnish, a precaution quite necessary, as there are Russians who scorn to know the languages of the conquered country; Svêkomans who maintain that it is unpatriotic to learn the tongue of the invader, or of the Finns, who are still, to the Swedish faction, somewhat of barbarians; and there are peasants who have qualified in the parish church for marriage by being able to read their own language, but who have learned no other. It is, however, essential for every one, man or woman, who would advance in state service, to be familiar with all three tongues. For trade, German also is needed, and English and French are often added to the list of languages spoken by these accomplished people.

Of Åbo I saw but little. It is a very ancient town, though the fact of its being timber-built accounts for the innumerable fires that have occurred there, in which the cathedral has at least twice been a sufferer.

But the origin of the fires has not always been accidental. This old capital of Western Finland has been the scene of the concentrated fury of

every contending party in the land. The Swedes, in their ancient tenure of the country, have more than once poured on it the vials of their wrath. Russia, too, in ancient times, and in still more olden days the heathen tribes, wrought havoc, especially directing their attacks on the Christian temple. What remains is beautiful, and the height and symmetrical proportion of the building add to its charm. Inside, shutting off various chapels, are huge iron gates, the designs of which are extremely handsome in their massive simplicity.

The stories embalmed in the cathedral need a chronicler, and open up many a memory of history and heroism. Here lies the peasant-woman who became Queen of Sweden, and whose story recalls the romantic narrative of a Scandinavian monarch's gallantry. He had married a beggar-maid, and to rebuke him for such a breach of kingly duty, a fellow-prince sent him a gorgeous coat, the effect of which was marred by a piece of coarse home-spun in the middle of the back. Not a word said the king, but presently the coat was returned to the sender, the homely patch having been turned

into the most costly part of the resplendent garment, for it was jewelled and broidered with priceless gems, and rare and exquisite needlework. No word was needed, and all lips were closed, while the beloved beggar-queen gloried in her husband's chivalry.

In this same cathedral lies more than one doughty bearer of an English name, from Henry, the pious bishop, to the General who honoured the name of Cockburn.

There was not much to see in the market-place, for the day was well advanced, but Finland is great in statues, and I was introduced to two of her worthies in the silent yet speaking figures of Porthan and Per Brahe, the latter by Runeberg, the sculptor, whose acquaintance I had just made on board the steamer.

The costumes of the Russian military, grey and red, and of the Finnish military, grey and blue, met one at every turn, and at the station, as I was going off, I saw a very grand-looking man, the head of the Finnish military establishment. Strange to say, however, he was of ancient Scottish name—Ramsay—a family as well known in Finland

as in North Britain for deeds of fame and prowess. The clan is widely spread, and is in high official service, and some of the most polished dames of the old *régime* belong to it by birth.

In Åbo I had no time to judge of its social delights. Just then, too, most of the unoccupied residents were at the watering-place not far off—Nådendal—a little town which was vying with Hangö for fame in the virtue of its mineral waters for rheumatism, and other cognate ailments.

Massage, which is the "cure" of the peasants, is also much used in these localities, and what neither bath nor massage can exorcise, must be serious indeed.

Near the watering-place is the site of an ancient monastery, and there is also a magnificent grove of oaks at Runsala. There are there, the Finnish proverb says, many trees sacred to God, and also, in days of yore, "Mary," had much land. Nowadays the chief legacy of the convent times are the lace-making and stocking knitting industries, for which the neighbourhood is celebrated. The papers of the convent have also been collected and printed, and are exceedingly quaint reading.

Among other industries carried on in the district is bee-keeping. Once upon a time a wise governor ordered every householder to keep bees on pain of being flogged, and so bees were kept, and still flourish, though they are rarely to be seen in other parts of Finland.

I ought perhaps to apologise for not giving any guide-book information, but I had to trust to my eyes and my ears on a day when everything was new and puzzling.

I shall always regret that the shortness of my stay prevented my seeing what I hear is one of the finest collections of antique relics in the quaint and ancient castle.

Åbo remained the capital of Western Finland till the Russian occupation in 1809, and in many old proverbs the name still lingers. "All roads go to Åbo," points to its former importance.

There is in the town a very good furniture shop, where old black oak, a great rarity in Finland, has been made into beautiful furniture, and where the more ordinary woods of the country are manufactured into really handsome suites.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE TRAIN.

THE journey to Urdiala is not, I suppose, interesting to the natives of the country, but to a stranger there was much which spoke for itself of a population rich in energy and perseverance. The second-class carriage was very comfortable, and resting among the cushions, and assured that the vigilant conductor who perambulates the train would not let me pass my station, I was quite at ease, and at leisure.

The first things that caught my eye were what I thought "toylike" wooden houses, all painted, or rather stained, the rich red so usual, I found, in northern countries. Then the wealth of the wild-flowers delighted me, ox-eyed daisies, silene, or campions, bed-straws, apple-pie, coltsfoot, butter-cups, Canterbury bells, hare-bells, and other cam-

panulas, and ragged robin, were simply massed together in hedges and ditches. I have seen a list of some of the more common flowers, but I find that an ordinary collector may easily include a thousand plants in his herbarium. It is not only the variety, but the masses of flowers, and the vividness of the colours which strike the eye. The bed-straw is called "our lady's straw," and the ox-eyed daisies "priests' collars," the wild everlastings, with their soft downy heads, "cats'-paws."

Girls and boys in the High Schools have to make collections of plants during the summer holidays. The first year, perhaps, they collect thirty, the next eighty, and the next a hundred. These have to be carefully pressed and mounted, and the Latin name, the locality—province and village—and habitat neatly written, with the date and name of the collector on each specimen. All this I learned to know later, but it certainly strikes a stranger immediately that here at least nature, during the short summer months, is rich in her produce, and full of exquisite resource in the clothing of bare earth and rugged stones. This

appears to be the case the further north you go, it is said to be specially true of Lapland.

Quaint, rough palisades of unbarked split poles take the place of hedges. They are made of stout wooden stakes driven into the ground. "Two is always best," says the Finnish proverb; "two fish in the sea, two birds in the air, two pairs of shoes under the bench, and two stakes in the fence." These double stakes are generally sharply pointed at the top, and the chief characteristics of the fence are that none of these stakes are of the same height, nor do the laths which form the horizontal bars of the fence ever run straight. The laths or boards are fastened to the stakes by thongs of wood, and another proverb says that one may see many changes in life, "one year one may be the stake in a fence, and another year the thong that binds the boards to the stake." There is a good reason for this apparent want of symmetry in the length of the stakes. They are left so long that, if they rot off in the soil, they may be driven further into the ground, and doubtless the operation shifts the boards. Altogether, these quaint fences in their soft grey tones, are by no means unpic-

turesque. They form a very visible line among the greens of the cultivated patches of potatoes and meadow-land, or round the forest. They evidently enter a good deal into the proverbial philosophy of the people, and a rather touching suggestion of how much better is a work of love than hired labour, is contained in the saying, "A servant makes a fence and it lasts for a year: a son makes a fence and it lasts for a lifetime."

In some places people are thinking of using granite for dykes, instead of fences, but blasting is expensive work, and evidently the inhabitants have not learned to build dykes properly. A good dyke-builder from Scotland might teach them how to use the stones to better purpose. Finland does not lack stone, as I learned on this journey. I remembered a picture in an English illustrated paper, of ploughing in Sutherlandshire, where a steam plough was standing, hopelessly looking at a granite boulder. But "the stone forbids not ploughing," and "'Go round and don't swear,' said the stone to the plough," sufficiently indicate the national spirit of determination and resource which animates the Finn, whether he be

ploughing, or working his way round political difficulties which would appal a less resolute nation. Thus the groups of rocks I noticed in cultivated patches have a meaning beyond their mere agricultural value, though "a stony land is a fertile land." Stone and wood are plentiful everywhere. The huge quantity of wood stacked all along the line astonished me, and I am not sure that it even then dawned on me that this was the *only fuel* of the land, and that our engine itself was dependent on these stacks for its supplies. I might certainly have noticed the peculiar funnel of the engine, one which is requisite for all wood-fuel locomotives, and tells its own tale.

I had been told to look out for a real Finnish dog, and at one of the stations I saw a little black creature of the type described, and I have since made acquaintance with some red ones. But they are Laplanders, and not Finns; and if you confound Laplanders with Finlanders while in the latter country, you will find yourself altogether in the wrong. I may here, perhaps, explain that Finlanders and Finns are by no means one and the

same thing. Finlanders are the descendants of other nations, chiefly of Swedes, nationalised, and belonging to Finland for centuries. "Finns" are the people of the soil.

I found it rather difficult even here to find the names of the stations, as there are advertisements everywhere. Van Houten's seems to be the cocoa *par excellence*, but I have never found that or any other cocoa used in the country places, though in the towns chocolate is a good deal drunk.

In the fallow fields along the line I saw cows cropping the weeds, or rather lying, chewing the cud of discontent, for they could find nought else to chew there. But the small strips of pasturage were very green. It was, however, evident that the country through which we came was only a strip of cultivated forest land, where labour followed in the wake of the train, and I found later that this was so, for the railway seldom passes through the more populous parts of the country, but penetrates the heart of ancient forests. In one sense this is perhaps good policy, as it opens up new districts, and has already had a good effect in increasing the

industry of the population in what were the less civilised parts of the land.

Here, and elsewhere in Finland, the people are full of resource, and use whatever they have at hand, starting manufactures of every kind—in a small way, perhaps, but sufficient for the immediate wants of the population.

Small brick-fields may be seen all along the line, and in the country you often come to a little heap of home-made bricks, which have been made for some special purpose. The clay does not seem to be very good, and—though, as I don't know much about bricks, I may be wrong—these amateur productions seem to me little better than clinkers. On the other hand, where they are machine-pressed, they are far drier than the ordinary brick used in Berkshire villages for cottages.

There were a good many people at the stations along the line, and as there is only one express each way during the day, the trains are pretty full. The people appeared to me very much sunburnt, especially the children. The little ones have almost copper-coloured faces, arms, and feet, and their hair is bleached a silvery white, which seems

all the whiter by its contrast to the tan of the skin. The children are often very pretty, and I saw afterwards some really dainty-looking little berry-sellers, with exquisitely cut lips, and well-modelled outline of cheek. Generally the eyelashes are fair, but here and there I observed what looked like a touch of gipsy blood; the eyes were deeper in their blue, and the lashes dark and long.

Altogether I had plenty to interest me in the three hours' railway journey, and I longed to know what was beyond the everlasting line of deep, rich green, the mysterious wall of forest on either hand, shutting out the horizon, and touching the blue grey of the distant sky with its shining, majestic spires. The "wealth" of the country is indeed at once its beauty and its guardian, for the forests both shelter the fields and modify the crisp dryness of the atmosphere.

In one respect, certainly, the journey from Abo to Urdiala was a surprise to me. You see no lakes, and only here and there do streams wind in and out of the meadows. You realise that the cultivated ground along the railway is only a clearing in a vast forest, and wonder where those

long reaches of fir, interspersed here and there with birch, will end. It is a question one often asks in Finland, and the answer is always as vague as the far north, where at last, and by degrees, the taller trees give place to dwarf birch and dwarf pine.

CHAPTER III.

URDIALA.

It is quite a descent in life when one jumps from a Finnish train on to the platform. Having accomplished this feat safely, I found myself in the embrace of my friend Miss de M., who quickly took me into the waiting-room, a large wooden building, with seats all round. There were many persons, chiefly peasants, waiting about, and as I nodded farewell to some of my fellow-passengers who had taken this somewhat circuitous route to Helsingfors, rather than waste time by following the dilatory coasting of the steamer, I felt I was really launched in a strange land.

The coachman, in a blue coat, and silver buttons with an admiral's insignia, had taken my baggage in charge. I learned afterwards, that elsewhere than in the country, an admiral's coachman would

wear a grey overcoat with several capes edged with bands of black, and a general's coachman wears a similar one edged with red bands. In an official society this is doubtless very useful, but in the depths of the country it would be an unnecessary distinction, as gentry of any kind are few and far between. Oscar, too, would not have tolerated such a weight of honour. A white linen collar, even, is an instrument of torture which he considers altogether beyond the endurance of an enlightened person of his standing. Once upon a time, it is true, for a fête of some kind, he did indulge in such folly, and was duly invested in collar and tie by two of the many maids who would fain have linked their lots with his. But alas, at nightfall, he found himself in a sore strait. He could not unfasten the collar without spoiling it altogether. With a devotion worthy of a better cause, he sat up all night in his straight-backed chair, hardly daring to close his eyes until a friend in the morning relieved him of his finery. From that day forward the mere mention of a collar terrifies him; and when it was suggested that he should permanently adopt this badge of civilisation,

he sent in his resignation at once. But Oscar was too good a servant to lose. He considers himself the guardian and caretaker of his master's establishment, and is most devoted. After he had possessed himself of my luggage he could not make up his mind how to dispose of it safely, as it was to follow by a cart, which had not arrived. However, his trouble was soon solved by the appearance of the cart, and a lad with it. The luggage, though, would have been quite safe with the railway officials, or even by the roadside, for honesty in Finland is the only policy.

When satisfied on this point, he still had to get the letters, and to ask the postmaster a hundred questions in a queer, querulous voice, as he is never satisfied that there are not, through some accident, more letters for the family than he receives at first. Then he considered he must readjust the rugs and shawls I had with me. Lucky it was, too, that I had shawls. The sun was brilliant, but I thought to myself, as we sat with the wind cutting through us, "Well, I am glad I have warm things with me, if this is July weather in Finland."

There was a short wait at the village shop, and Oscar grumbled at the manner in which the parcels were made up as "not fit for a gentleman's carriage," and then, pocketing both his displeasure and the parcels, touched up his Finnish steeds, shaking his brilliant yellow woven reins, and uttering sharp ejaculations.

The country was more open here, and splendid potato fields, and long reaches of luxuriant cultivation were to be seen, fine rye waving and rippling in the wind, and shining like silver in the sunshine.

"How lovely, and how cold!" I exclaimed, just as I had said in the morning. To the left was the first lake I had seen, but afterwards I hardly noticed it, for it was small and uninteresting in comparison with others in the neighbourhood.

Up and down hill we went, at a sharp rattling pace—round acute corners, and over ruts, tree-roots and stumps, and infant boulders, at a tearing pace. I certainly set my teeth once or twice, when I saw what we were doing, and I heard afterwards that the road is not considered very safe for the victoria and pair. The coachman, however, is so good that he knows what he is

about, and of his own accord he never condescends to drive, in the summer, by the safer but more roundabout route, while in winter snow levels all uneven surfaces.

Here again the wild flowers astonished me. Forget-me-nots made the banks like *parquets* of green and blue enamel. Everywhere the green was of the most vivid emerald. We passed the poorhouse, with its separate buildings for orphan children and for the older paupers. The buildings were bright with yellow paint. They, and the large parish school close by, cost many thousand pounds to build. Further on was the church, which, however, is not a very ancient one; and then, some two miles from our destination, the granite-posted gate shut off the private grounds of the estate.

We were glad when we found ourselves in the forest, which here not only blocked out the horizon, but closed in all round us. The wind blew from the north, fresh from a pile of icebergs, we felt sure.

Yet when, a little later, we were sheltered from it, and enjoying dinner in the broad verandah

looking towards the south, we felt quite warm and comfortable.

A Finnish house is generally quite different from an English one, but here English influence was to be seen, and the comfort was quite home-like. I, however, greatly admired the colour of the cow-hair carpet, of home manufacture, which covered the floor of my bedroom, the brown and gold tints of the Finnish wall-paper, and I wondered at the great stoves which I have since learned to appreciate, and which run up the whole height of the room. I was delighted, too, with the pictures in neutral tints, which are frescoed on the drawing-room walls, for the present generation have retained the quaint drawings which one hundred and forty years ago must have been considered very fine. They represent this ancient family mansion, and views in its neighbourhood. Two river scenes are really very interesting, and though there is a touch of primitive quaintness in the style, it only adds piquancy to these relics of ancestral times.

I could not go round the house and garden that evening, and as I sat writing in my room early

next morning came the news I little expected to hear; but a few minutes later, when out among the fields, I saw how true it was. All the potatoes had been bitten black by the intense frost which had come up with the cruel north wind. The people would have no potatoes that year. Later on we heard that the glorious fields of rye had been blasted, too, by the same icy touch; but this could not be proved for another three weeks or so. Then, indeed, I learnt to know how certainly the dead white strip among the ripening grain meant disappointment and loss.

The frost in Finland seems to be as erratic as the law of storms; both that and the English rules of pronunciation, which so sorely puzzle the foreigner, may yield the patient student some clue to their mysteries at last. The frost really seems as capricious as a child gathering flowers. It will nip every plant on a patch, then skip over a whole row of potatoes or beans, blacken one flourishing pea-plant to its stump, and not touch another in the row. Doubtless drainage has much to say in the matter, and soil and situation also. Low-lying ground always suffers most in all countries, and

bog soil, however well drained and cultivated, is treacherous for crops.

I found that the large property of over ten thousand acres, belonging to my friend's father, contained about three thousand cultivated acres. The valuable forests, and lakes rich in fish, and wild bog-land made up the remainder of the estate.

Wherever rye was planted on bog-land it was practically entirely lost, and unfortunately, in the rotation of crops, the larger part of the reclaimed land was this year laid down with that crop, so the loss was heavy.

Later on in the year we went to see one of those large bogs, which was in process of reclamation. Years, perhaps centuries previously, an outlet into a river from a large forest had been blocked up. Gradually and slowly the process of decay and degeneration had gone on. The forest had vanished, and the reach of moss and morass hid in its depths the monarchs of the wood. The present owner of the land, three years ago, opened up the obstruction above the stream, and the morass parted with some of its moisture. It

became firm enough for the woodman's tread. Deep trenches were dug, and when we wandered there one hot August day, we could see the huge timbers showing along the trench sides, and we walked across dried sphagnum, and sank almost knee-deep in it, though wherever we came near the stream, now swollen by the waters of the bog, we found the ground rich in the bright red of the lesser sundew. I should be afraid to say how many acres were being reclaimed in this particular bog, but it was estimated that if it only produced one successful crop of rye, it would more than pay the cost of reclamation.

Nevertheless, many agriculturists believe that Finland would do better as a cattle-rearing, butter-making country, than in using its soil for grain. But of this I will give more detail later, for the farm in which I spent so many happy weeks had a huge steam dairy, and produces some of the best butter, which, however, rarely reaches England as Finnish butter. The process of mixing and re-labelling "Danish butter," which takes place at Copenhagen, is destructive to Finnish trade.

In ten thousand acres of forest, lake, farm, and

bog, there is plenty to see, and even in the immediate surroundings of the house there was much that was strange. The trees were like our English ones, only with new faces. Dutch limes, with huge keys shining white among the leaves, formed the avenue up to the house. Hawthorns, with large handsome leaves, and later on, with red and golden haws, which would put our little red berries to shame, came, as did also the acacias, from Siberia. Round the pond there were varieties of Salix, and maples, too, grow sturdily. Firs and pines of different kinds flourish, and larches also, while two oaks have stubbornly withstood winter colds and heavy storms of autumn.

While I was still in this charming place I had the good fortune to witness two magnificent storms. The one in the autumn, in which the *Russalka* went down, was terrible. But previously, one hot summer's night, when we had gone on to the lake to get a breath of air, and to see the little village with the ruins of the original Urdiala Church, we turned back, warned by the splendid clouds and distant lightning, and by the boatman's significant expression, "God walks," as the

thunder muttered in the distance. We reached home safely, and then ran up the hill to a large stone house, which was built some sixty years ago, and which, though not nearly so comfortable or sheltered as the rambling family dwelling below it, is useful as a business house, and has a huge room suitable for village and gala gatherings. From this high point we saw the storm gather and roll, lighting torches, as it were, on every side of the heavens, and sweeping over the lake, now sheets of silvery rain, now radiance of golden lightning. The best view of the garden and farm-buildings is obtained from here. In the lake was the bathing-shed, near it the red bath-house, the smith's forge, and the laundry, all in the same rich colour. Higher up were the dairy, the carpenter's shed, the steward's house, and other rooms used by the servants. Behind the big house were the stables, cow-houses, etc.; west, were the rye-house, ice-house, barns, and storehouse; and to the far east the greenhouse, gardens, cottage, and pig-houses.

Far to the south, on the west bank of the lake, stood the parson's house, and on the lands sloping

down to it were fields of turnip, what should have been potatoes, and one huge field of tares and oats, cut as green food for cattle, and also a field of beans. A new parsonage was being built, which indeed was much needed, though, doubtless, memories linger about the old one hard to put on one side.

I did not remain long in this lovely spot, though long enough to have a sight of Finnish church-going, and also of a fishing picnic. The latter took us to a tiny, two-roomed cottage in a lake some versts away from my friend's house. We drove through a dense forest, in which the trees seemed, to my ignorant mind, to want thinning, but I learnt that they are believed to grow up into better timber, if the forest round them is thick. The possibility of seeing an elk added to the excitement of the drive. Foxes are plentiful, and game hide in the branches. A wolf-pit, now disused for many a long decade, showed in an opening of the wood. A sportsman with us had a gun, for with July 15th duck-shooting begins, but we preferred the quieter sport.

After passing one of the large farms on the

estate where the ploughing oxen and young calves are generally kept, we came to a picturesque forest lodge. The forester and his wife expected us, and so the floor of her rooms was thickly spread with raspberry leaves, and the good-wife brought out her cool drink of oatmeal beer.

A Finnish cottage of any pretension has generally the family dwelling, and a detached guest-house. On the wealth of the householder depends the style and size of the guest-room. Just then it was being used by the family, as the dwelling-house was under repair. The quaint way in which the open rafters are used as a general storehouse, wardrobe, and larder is very amusing. Bread—round, hard loaves of rye, three of which a man eats a day, but which English teeth could hardly pierce — are stored there, a long pole running through them, for they are made with a hole in the middle. There also were some dried fish, and bacon, and all the family clothes! The little garden had grown up in response to the efforts of my friend, who offered a prize for the best cottage gardening. A present of apple and pear trees had been made to those who were willing to compete, and within three

years the villagers had made a start in their ideas. Formerly they had few vegetables except potatoes; now they had cabbages, radishes, and onions. Flowers, also, and small fruit trees were flourishing. The peasant of Tavastland, in which Urdiala lies, does not usually care to cultivate *trees*. "Do you think I cannot manage to keep *my* land free of trees?" is a common rejoinder, when any one, eyeing regretfully the bare patch round a cottage, suggests that a few trees would shelter and beautify it.

From the lodge we went across a lovely lake to the island cottage. Here we sat, my friend and I, on the steps of the landing-place, taking in the beauty of the scene. Our sportsman had gone off to another lake for duck. Inside the cottage the servant was burning juniper twigs to overpower the insects. So we lingered and lingered. Intense silence prevailed, broken now and again by a thrush calling—but not a bird sang. Wild duck passed and repassed, and over the water came the clank of the cattle-bells in the forests round, with their weird, monotonous note. The water rippled against the steps, and the fishes leaped almost out

of the water. The west was still glowing with the ineffable radiance of sunset when we turned into our cottage at twelve o'clock, and three stars, the first sign of shortening days, peeped between the clouds which began to dapple the sky. The mirror of the lake became beautiful with the cloud pictures, with the deep shadows, and the sunset lights.

I knew nothing more until "Yecco" rubbed his nose against my hand, having slept all night under the table, and I awoke at 5.30 to hear the splash of the forester's oars. Then came a delicious glass of warm milk, and after it I went for a row with the servant, came back to breakfast, and spent the morning wandering with my friend in the forests, where the scent of the butterfly orchids (night-violets they call them here) took me back, in mind, to Sussex downs and meadows. Pirolas, and the dainty Linnæa Borealis were new to me and very lovely, and I wished I were learned in ferns, as here they carpeted the ground. I noticed, too, the extraordinary variety and beauty of mosses and lichen, and was told that many of the latter are good for dyeing. The mushrooms, or rather edible fungi, were not then in season.

The edible berries are almost as numerous as the mushrooms. There is ôkerbáren, of which delicious jam is made ; it has a delicate pink flower, and is a bramble-like plant. Then there are the bilberry, the wild strawberry, the cranberry, and the real *crane*-berry, growing on bogs only ; also the hjortron, a plentiful crop of which foretells a frosty year. It is something like a yellow dewberry, but has a stone in each little compartment. Late in the year there is also a dewberry which is large, watery, and tasteless. These many fruits are doubtless for the birds, but I was too late in the year to hear any of the sweet singing, which is one of the chief charms of Finnish country life. The birds seem to moult a little earlier than with us, and there is little singing after June.

But before I leave Urdiala, I must not forget poor Jim, who, true to the Finnish proverb—"a crane in a tree soon breaks its leg"—had met with this identical accident. But Jim is head-gardener there on a plan of his own, and has, during the summer months, to be kept in a large enclosure, from which he is not able to fly. He tries now and then to use his wings, and actually gets a little distance above

the ground, but gives it up, after a few yards' helpless flopping. Twice a year poor Jim is very sad. When the cranes come north, and go south, he does not know what to make of it. It seems that none ever venture near to mate with him, and he lives alone, and in a perpetual state of inquiry. The glorious row of poppies grown from seed brought here from Dorsetshire and Hampshire, attracted Jim much, and as their capsules developed, whenever he got a chance of eluding the hen-wife, as she fed him, he would stray thither, and peck and try. Jim loved not Mars, the black and white Dalmatian dog, who always tried to be friendly, but was received with attempts at pecking. As autumn came, and the plants could no longer be preserved from frost, Jim was allowed to garden, which he did very effectually, rooting out the plants from the centre of the bed, and seating himself on the top of the border as proud as a general who has sacked a town. Who set Jim's leg I do not know, but my friend was the surgeon of the place, and her father was the consulting physician!

An admiral in the Russian service, twice governor of important provinces, and . . . but as these lines

may meet his eye I must not add the picture I would fain draw of Finnish greatness, nobility, and hospitality, such as I met with from my host and his wife. His Excellency, moreover, for many years, when no doctor was at hand, was the only efficient medical adviser in the neighbourhood, and now that there is a practitioner some few miles off, though age makes the admiral desire to rest a little, the poor trust him too well to go elsewhere.

His eldest daughter added to her many accomplishments by a course at the *clinique* at Helsingfors, and she has some half-dozen patients daily. Sometimes a finger is mortified with an incurable sore, and must be taken away, or a deep and neglected wound in the head must be healed, or a throat wants syringing, or burns, scalds, bull thrusts and cuts need dressing. It is little wonder that the poor refuse to go further afield for their medical officer!

I shall not have space here to tell of my short visit to Petersburg, but there, too, an English gentleman and his daughter perform the same charitable work for the eyes of the poor, even the Finnish poor, living near the great city.

Finnish proverbs, probably coming from Eastern tribes, are full of references to the blind or one-eyed, and no doubt originate in the prevalence of this terrible affliction, which is not so common in the West of Finland. Cold winds, dazzling snow, and formerly the smoke-huts (*i.e.*, huts with no chimneys) are supposed to cause the complaint, which usually takes the form of spots.

At all events the daughter once, when her father was absent, had 1500 patients in three months. The remedy used is one handed down in the family for generations, and there is no charge of course for this noble work.

There are of course district visitors in England who look after the sick, and country ladies who have their medicine cupboards. But what a good thing it would be if the daughters of rich homes, who find so little to do when once the freshness of youth is past, would devote themselves to some branch of the healing art, and give the poor that care which it is often beyond the power of the hard-worked parish doctor to bestow.

Another peculiarity of this primitive village was the *masseuse*, a quaint and delightful person. She

is gate-keeper and weaver for the big house, and is aged seventy-six. She is about five feet nothing in height, if as much, and is light, but broad and bony. Her short, cropped hair, and twinkling eyes are delightful in their way. Alas, fathers in Finland, among the poor, are often missing when most wanted, and though she wears a betrothal ring, she never had a wedding one, and has had hard work to bring up her child. Sorrow has left its mark on her, but the strength of the face shows that she has conquered her trouble, and so in her old age she is a joy and comfort to many. Hearing of her as a wonderful old body, I brought out from England a bright blue silk handkerchief, as a head-cover. I could hardly have chosen worse. By anyone past girlhood (and in Finland young girls love red) only black or dark-coloured garments are worn. Wedding and Sunday finery is always black. But one day my friend, unexpectedly to me, mentioned the handkerchief to the old lodge-keeper. Down flopped this little square figure on to the cottage step, and backwards and forwards it rolled in an ecstasy of delight and joviality. Later on I presented the hardly splendid gift, and she put

her arms round my neck, kissed me, and lifted me quite off my feet, as though I were a baby. Her massage was admirable, and reminded me of the delightful Indian art, which relieves one in fever and weariness. The bath and massage are the two great remedies of Finland, and date from days far back, as the heroic time of Wainoninen, who, among his many other trades, was magic physician, *par excellence.*

CHAPTER IV.

FINLAND AS A STATE.

So little is known in England of Finland and its Government, that it may be well here to mention a few facts with regard to its history, its legislature, and its position in the Russian Empire. But to those who would rather go straight on with me on my travels through the country, I would say, "Skip the next three chapters, and proceed to Chapter VII."

Who, and of what race were the Finns? That is a question which would take long to discuss, but the general opinion is that they belonged to the Turanian tribes, who, passing through Persia, pressed northward, advancing slowly, till they reached the borders of what is now called the Gulf of Finland. Probably they went north-west after the Buddhist era, for they carried with them

the emblems of that faith. Witsen, writing in the end of the seventeenth century, suggests that the cognate tribes, as the Siberians are now known to be, also were the original stock of the Red Indian. The Turanians appear to have spread over Finland about the ninth century, but meanwhile they had lived alongside of many Aryan and of some Slav tribes. To judge from their language, they tarried longer among the Aryans than with the Slavs, for many of their linguistic roots, if not belonging to a prehistoric parent tongue, are certainly of Aryan origin.

One of the silent tokens of the route that the first Turanian tribes took, may be found in a necklace of coins (of which I have a photograph) now in the Helsingfors museum. This interesting relic was found some forty years ago in the centre of Tavastland. It consists of thin silver coins of the Sāmānid race of Persian monarchs. Together with these Eastern pieces of money are four Anglo-Saxon, and one Swedish coin. A tiny amulet completes the collection.

The coins of the same dynasty are found throughout Northern Europe, and have recently

been discovered at Bangor, and in Skye. But no coins of Scandinavia or Britain have been found in Persia. It is probable, therefore, that some tribes pressing north-westward, carried with them the precious stores of gold and silver metals in the form of coin, and that they never returned on their track, nor traded again with their old companions, otherwise the coinage current in their new homes would have been found in their former haunts.

The date of the Sāmānid corresponds with the era at which the present Finns are supposed to have occupied "Suomi." But the migration of nomads northwards was constant, and the Finns are not one tribe, but several, a fact little appreciated until one has travelled among the people. In Tavastland, south-west Finland, the tribes seem to have come straight across the Gulf of Finland, and to be closely related to the Esthonians and Livonians on its southern side. They were originally called Hämälainens, and if ever there was a genuine Paddy out of Ireland, the tales of the Hämälainens would make one fancy one had found a new Erin in this dependency of Russia. The good man who wanted to kill a bear, and was

afraid of treading down his corn by walking through it, so got four of his friends to carry him into the field on their shoulders, must have had good Irish blood in his veins.

But far in the north, near Kajana, there is a small tribe known as Qvens. These are probably the remains of an earlier race of inhabitants of the same stock, with whom the name of Finn originated. In Newlands, again, in the extreme south-west of the country, there are traces of a Scandinavian people, who apparently have no connection with the later Scandinavian invasion, but settled and remained in Finland when the Ruotsi travelled into Sweden, and were not dislodged when they returned on their tracks to conquer and give their name to Russia. Yet again—the Karelians are a tribe from beyond the eastern borders of Finland, as unlike the Tavastlander as the Italian is unlike the Teuton. The Lapps in the extreme north are of a stock which, though ethnologically different, yet adopted a speech which has considerable affinity with the Finnish.

Such diversities of origin naturally produce differences of appearance, manners, and character,

which give interest to a journey through the country. They are further increased by what is said to be a blending of Tavastlander and Karelian origin in the Savolaks race of Central Finland. The external influence of Swede on the west, and Slav on the eastern, or Russian boundary, is also to be observed. In the first case it is very marked, in the latter only occasional and partial.

Finland's history dates back at present only to the 12th century, when Erik I., King of Sweden, conquered and strove to Christianise the land. English bishops landed in the country, and did good work. The Roman church held sway till Reformation times, and since that epoch of strong religious movement, Finland has been constant to the Episcopal form of Lutheranism. Russia tries very hard to gain converts to the Greek church, and issues private instructions, often at variance with the constitution, with regard to mixed marriages, such as the enactments that every child of such unions must be Greek by religion (and once "Greek" no power on earth can un-Greek you), and that marriages must not be solemnised except by Greek ritual.

For more than six centuries Finland was under Sweden. She received from that country much that was good, and had the ruling power been strong enough to shield her from Russia, the conservative, law-abiding, peace-loving Finns would have remained content under their rulers. Sweden, however, was weak, Russia was near, and ever cruel and relentless. "What is heard?" is the invariable salutation still in Eastern Finland. In former years the answer was "Peace," or "War," as might chance, and never for twenty-five consecutive years was it "peace." Fire and sword, pestilence and famine, kept the Finn under a yoke of constant suffering. When, therefore, in 1808, Russia again made her blood-stained entrance into the land, the counsel of the patriot party among the Finns was in favour of placing the country entirely under Russia.

Politically, then, the history of Finland since the earliest times, has been that of a border province between two inimical powers. Sweden held it for centuries. Russia has had it for nearly one, and contrary to the usual experience of Russian-ruled provinces, Finland has gained greatly

by the change. In the first eight centuries, when she belonged to a distant and weak power, the nearer and stronger country was a most destructive neighbour, and there is no doubt but that the cession to Russia was a wise and patriotic step. The Finns maintained their constitution and their Lutheran faith. Alexander I., in conceding them their constitution, re-united in one country the provinces beyond Viborg, which had already been acquired by Russia, to those west of that town, which had been until then retained by Sweden, Viborg itself being regarded as the capital of Eastern Finland. It now waned in importance, as did also the ancient capital of Åbo, while the cosmopolitan western town of Helsingfors rose, with its domes and spires, a new city, a new entity in the fortunes of the grand-duchy.

In the days of the constant wars, Russia had given to her own nobles the lands she wrested from the Finns, and this Russianised territory the State of Finland decided should, if possible, be bought back. This patriotic determination was carried out, the State became the possessors of the land, but the original owners of the soil were allowed to

ransom their former holdings, or, when they could not afford to do this, they and their descendants were given the right of dwelling in their old homes at rentals which to us seem small indeed. Nevertheless, many of them are so poor that they cannot keep their rents paid up. When I was staying with Paraske, the last of the Runo singers, as described in a later chapter, she was in great trouble. Her only son, who should have been (had he been worth anything) able to make an honest living, would not work, and though she had paid her share of her rental, his was in arrears, and had been so for three years. Consequently the little property lapsed to the Government, and an auction was held while we were in Sakkola. The holding was bought by her neighbour, to whom it had long been a Naboth's vineyard.

The poorest English peasant would have scorned such a residence, and indeed the whole village is an eyesore to the British traveller, but it is one of the scattered villages which belong to the Greek faith, and I suppose policy hardly admits of sweeping it away. Nevertheless, for sanitary reasons, this might well be done. The holding was sold for the

payment of the debts upon it, but Paraske and her family had it in their power, until the sale was sanctioned by the State, to redeem it by paying up. I was very anxious that this should be done; Paraske had made, for her, quite a nice sum, while in the west of Finland, but to my dismay, she thought she would do a little trading on her own account, and, with the improvident turn which so often marks the artistic temperament, left herself without the means of even reaching home. It was also plain that it would on the whole be better to let the hut, and ground belonging to it, go, and set her free from her son's inconvenient dependence upon her. I saw the son, a nice-looking, blue-eyed fair man, with a troubled expression on his brow. The old anti-mother-in-law instinct is strong in Vaskyla village, as elsewhere, so Paraske puts her troubles down to her son's wife.

Besides being the proprietor of these private estates, the Government possesses certain State farms, once the perquisites of the chief officers in the Swedish army. The farms are still cultivated for the benefit of the State, and are centres of enterprise and of advanced scientific agriculture.

It also, when redeeming the land, reserved to itself the great salmon fisheries, notably those near the Ladoga. These are a source of great wealth, both to the State, and to the fishermen who hire them.

When, in 1808, the Finns chose the stronger power for their ruler, they guarded their liberties, as I have said, by a constitution, which was signed by Alexander I., Nicholas I., and by both the later Alexanders. The new Nicholas also signed it on his accession. The monarch who gave effect to the constitution was Alexander II., of glorious memory. Alexander I. had, it is true, convened the Diet of Borgå in 1809, but from that time till the reign of Alexander II. the constitution was, as far as the Diet was concerned, a dead letter. Since then it has been convened every third year, and there is no doubt that it is owing to this wise action on his part that Finland has grown and developed so rapidly in the last quarter of a century. The power of voting money resides in this assembly, and it is only through its action that enterprise and commerce can be extended.

There are four estates — peasants, clergy, burghers, and nobles. The latter, an hereditary

aristocracy, are chiefly of Swedish origin, or creation. They consist of a large number of untitled nobility—who are addressed as Well-born —a few counts, and a large number of barons. These nobles and a considerable portion of the burgher-class have Swedish names, Swedish customs, and Swedish proclivities. All that is good, aristocratic, and worth living for is summed up in their eyes in the word "Svekoman." Each chamber of the Diet has a president of its own election, except in the Clergy House, where the archbishop is supreme. The president of the nobles is president of the whole Diet.

Besides the Diet, there is the Senate, which, under the Governor-General, carries on the government when the Diet is not sitting. It consists of twenty-two members, and is formed partly of nominees of the Czar, partly of members of Finnish choice. More than one senator has in recent years earned the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen, by protesting against Russian innovation and intrigue, and has retired rather than be a party to broken faith and wrong-doing. Indeed, to be in the Senate is a most invidious position, or was so during

the reign of the late Czar, and it was often a question whether it was most patriotic to struggle against infringement of the constitution by resigning, or to remain a senator, and protest, protest, protest, to the bitter end.

The Governor-General is appointed by the Czar, and much depends upon him and his wife. The present Governor-General is a bitter Russophil, and as he greatly prefers to reside in Petersburg, Finland is often relieved of his presence, but when in residence he lives at Helsingfors. His wife, too, who died during my stay in the Archduchy, managed to make Russian society and rule ungrateful to the Finnish people, a task which, doubtless, was not a difficult one.

There is also a governor to every *län*, or county, or province, and of these counties there are eight; and a president also rules over the judicial courts at Åbo and Viborg. These officials, however, are always Finnish, as is also the commander of the Finnish army.

But if much depends on the Governor, the Emperor's Viceroy, still more depends, and in a delicate way, on the Secretary for Finland at the

Court of St. Petersburg. Yet, however grave the anxiety in the country, however bitter the feeling of wrong and injustice, disloyalty to the Czar is unknown. The present Empress was hailed with joy as being more English than German, and as the sister of that greatly beloved lady, the wife of Prince Sergius. The late Emperor's widow is also greatly beloved in Finland, where she is generally called by her Lutheran, Christian name of Dagmar.

CHAPTER V.

FINNISH CHARACTERISTICS.

NOTHING is more striking in Finland than the calm common-sense which rules supreme in all matters of national policy. Anything like resistance to authority is unknown, except among criminals, and they do not form a large class.

There is never any sedition, *émeute*, or mob in Finland. Absolutely law-abiding and unprovocative, the Finns keep a vigilant look-out for every symptom of Socialism, Anarchism, or any other "ism" that might give Russia an excuse for interference. As for Nihilism, not only is it abhorred as a thing past endurance—as mad and irrational—but it would be strongly and severely treated did it ever show itself in the loyal though independent Archduchy.

Although passports are *de rigueur*, they are

never demanded from ordinary travellers, but once let the visitor show the faintest sign of being infected with a political "ism," and he will be reminded that he is in Finland. I saw one case just as I was leaving. Privately I believed it to be a case of alcohol*ism;* but at all events the traveller, after spending some time before coming our way in detention in the capital, found it wiser to retire, and left our company under somewhat hasty and mysterious circumstances.

So closely are the ports watched—and all the more effectually in that they appear to be unguarded—that a Nihilist or Anarchist would have little opportunity of escape. This is the practical way in which the Finn serves his country and promotes liberty, by checking license. I wish our new-fangled "patriots," who permit license to check liberty, would study patriotism under the Finns.

There has been *one* terrible mistake made in past Finnish policy. The Swedish element considered itself for a long time an oligarchic and aristocratic *crème de la crème,* and utterly scorned their Finnish fellow-countrymen. The latter, by an

aberration of judgment hard to pardon, coquetted with Russia to break the power of the Swedish nobles. It is broken, but the party known as the New Finoman, now see in a coalition with the Svekoman the only source of strength and stability. In this young party, growing up in the place of the original heroes and patriots who, but for their one fatal mistake, might be called the fathers of their country, lies the hope of Finland. The Svekoman sees that the energy, the independence, the doggedness of the Finn, his tenacity of purpose, reserve, and prudence, give him a force which presents an almost impervious front to Russian chicanery and intrigue. The Finoman sees that the higher social culture of the Svekoman is not a thing to despise. Hence has sprung up this young Finoman party, which includes most of the talent, genius, and wit of Finland, and has for its aim the glorification and maintenance of Finnish nationality, alike in art, literature, education, manufacture, and commerce.

This unhappy division between the two races has had a retarding influence, without doubt, on the development of the country, and also on the

Finnish tongue. Whilst the Svekomans despised their Finoman fellow-subjects as barbarian (and even now the verb cannot be altogether used in the preterite) they regarded their Turanian speech as a heathenish "lingo." No true Svekoman would learn Finnish, except to convey necessary orders to servants or work-people. Some few families still have this absurd prejudice, and ladies think it a condescension to know "Kitchen Finnish" with which to direct domestics. They consider it a great hardship if their avocations make it necessary for them to learn the language properly.

But Finnish may force itself into even the private circles of the Svekomans, for in two successive Parliaments it has invaded first the Burghers', and now the Nobles' House. A very hot debate last year (1894) ended in placing Finnish on an equality with Swedish, even in the Upper House—a victory which certainly had patriotism and common-sense on its side.

The sons of Finland make admirable colonists, or rather settlers, and have an unique faculty for making surrounding colonists learn their language. In the United States I think I am right in saying

that there are thirty-six newspapers printed in Finnish.

It is curious to note the strides which this tongue has made during the last few years in its own land. Tracts which were formerly (six or seven years ago) entirely Swedish speaking, are now clamouring for Finnish schools, and demanding Finnish preachers. It is a wonderful language, and though I have heard Svekomans sneer at a foreigner for admiring so barbarous a tongue, it is much more beautiful to my ears than Swedish, as spoken in Finland, and far more highly-polished a language. It lends itself to the most subtle and delicate refinement of expression, and is musical and rhythmic in utterance. There is a suggestion of poetic instinct and euphony in the assimilation of all the vowel sounds in a word. The consonants give character, while the vowels are soft, abundant, and melodious.

There is a poetic literature in Finnish, which is far richer than that of Sweden, though less known.

It is the legendary song of Finland that merits the attention of Europe. In the cupboards

of one of the literary societies are accumulated unpublished songs handed down from generation to generation, awaiting publication, but funds fail, and translators also; for until the Finnish verse finds its way into some general European language, much of its value as a storehouse of ethnological treasures will remain unappreciated.

As a spoken tongue Finnish differs so greatly from the literary language that a student will not necessarily be a good colloquial scholar. Ladies who only speak "Kitchen Finnish" cannot understand the printed books, and servants are not of necessity able to read the works of fiction, or even to be well-versed in newspaper language. As the years roll on, doubtless the two currents will assimilate, especially through the means of journalism. Any traveller would be astounded at the circulation of Finnish newspapers in outlying villages. At each railway station, when the mail train of the day arrives, there is a regular hurricane of newspapers fluttering through the ticket-hole to the peasant boys and girls who daily or weekly carry their budget round to the houses in their villages.

Often, if you meet several peasants, and have a talk, they will speak of London, or Hull, or Manchester, or mention special features of English life, which they wish to hear more about. "Where on earth did you hear of that?" one asks, startled at such minute knowledge, perhaps of educational questions, or social celebrities. "Oh," they will answer, "we read it in this paper, or that," and each will mention some new particular, which has been obtained from these ever-present newspapers.

The censorship of the Press is irritating and absurd to a degree past belief. Constantly, "Press-hinder" is the reply when you ask the reason of the non-arrival of your newspaper. A simple little sentence, of which no one can possibly see the harm, will be the innocent cause of the delay. No word about the Czar or the Imperial family may be ventured upon with safety. Cholera is a dangerous subject, and the most frivolous exceptions are taken to matters of constitutional importance.

As a method of revenge for these petty tyrannies, there often appear small parables, allegorical remarks, or certain involved and somewhat queerly-

phrased remarks, which, however they may escape the censor's eye, are understood by the community at large. Sometimes a censor is too lax, and the officials find a statement in some small local paper which is likely to be offensive to the Imperial feelings. Needless to say, that special issue of the paper has a great success, but the censor for the particular locality is removed, or reprimanded.

The grandest day in Finland for many a long year was that on which the statue of Alexander II. was unveiled at Helsingfors in '94. The following ode in his honour, altered for the occasion, and intended to be introduced into a cantata, also arranged for this event, was entirely prohibited, incredible though it seems. The Governor-General was possessed by the idea that praise of Alexander II. was blame of Alexander III., and he put every possible hindrance in the way of any exhibition of the people's loyalty to the memory of their late archduke. The ode had been printed in one of the chief papers some weeks previous to the unveiling, but the censor's pen went through it. A week before the ceremony it appeared in a small local newspaper, the censor of that district not having

noticed its insertion. The circulation of the journal went up enormously, but what happened to the censor I never heard.

This is, of course, a translation of the forbidden poem. I append the original however for readers versed in that tongue.

HAIL TO THEE!

Hail, noble Prince! From town and land
Our greetings come, from isle and strand,
  From forest, hill, and dale.
Wherever Finland's folk may rest
Their debt for all they value best,
  In love to thee they pay.
It beams, as erst on that bright morn
'Twas woke by thee, with hope new-born.
And all its strength shall last as long
  As Finland's folk are true.

'Twas not the glamour of thy throne
  Which woke our love for thee,
Nor glory of imperial name
  That Finland loved to see.
Nay, wouldst thou know wherefore this love
  Within our hearts was lit,
Read but the page thy hand, O Prince,
  Hath on our history writ.

Ay, even until far-off time
  Shall Finland write thy name
(However rich her future be),
  First on her roll of fame;

And it shall shine, a holy name,
Engraved on Finland's heart,
And it shall soar from day to day,
Of Finland's self a part.

And now, when in these later times,
Blooming, thy Finland smiles,
Hedged by her father's laws,
With harvests gathered from thy seed,
Of princely vows which thou, indeed,
Didst sow for coming days,
Anew we honour thy loved name,
Bright herald of the dawn that came,
Whose magic word, for hope deferred,
Such glad assurance gave.

HELL DIG!*

Hell ädle furste! Från stad och land
med hälsning vi komma från ö och strand,
från skogar, höjder och dalar;
hvar Finlands folk har ett hem sig fäst
sin skuld med alt hvad det äger bäst
i kärlek det Dig betalar.
Det sänder strålen, som nyfödd bräckt
i hoppets morgon, som själf Du väckt,
det sänder hvar kraft som löstes,
så långt, som hans väg sig sträckt.

Ej var det skimret kring din tron,
som furste oss berusat,
ej glansen af Ditt Kejsarnamn,
som Finlands folk så tjusat.

* By Gabr. Lagus, composed 1876.

Nej, —vill Du veta hvarför så
af oss Du älskad blifvit,
läs svaret på de blad Du själf
i våra häfder skrifvit.

Och sent den randas skall den dag,
hur rik vår framtid blifver,
då Finland ej Ditt namn till först
bland sina stora skrifver.
Det stråla skall ett högtidsnamn
i Finlands hjärta skuret,
det stiga skall från dag till dag
af Finlands kärlek buret.

Och när en gång i de nya år
i högre blomning Ditt Finland står,
i hägnad af fädrens lagar,
med hvarje skörd, som i mognad gått,
ur löftets sädd, som Du ädle sått
för kommande framtidsdagar,
det firas, Ditt minne, likt dens på nytt,
som bådat hvar ljusnande tid, som grytt,
hvars härskareord vår väntan
i segrande tro förbytt.

All English papers are subjected to rigorous inspection. You may, if your newspapers go through Russia, count yourself lucky to get them, if at all, ten days late. The correspondence (except commercial letters, which are generally considered too innocent, or too important to tamper

with) between England and Finland, *viâ* Russia, is very uncertain. It is always necessary to register letters going by that (the quickest) route. Two causes, non-political, are said to cause this inconvenience. The letters are searched for money, and are thrown on one side equally whether containing notes, or void of offence—it is not worth while to reseal them. If stolen for no other reason, they are often taken for the sake of the foreign stamp.

The whole stamp question is a very sore point in Finland. It is one of the innovations Russia has made by private arrangement. The post-office has been to a certain degree Russianised—not wholly, for the Finns would have withstood to the death such an infringement of their rights. The idea is that Russia will supersede the Finnish stamp with the Imperial one. Already letters between Russia and Finland must bear Russian stamps, differing only from the Imperial one by stars distributed on the field of the stamp. These are legal in Finnish correspondence, but woe betide you if you bought and used such stamps in writing to your friends within the country.

Another exaction is that which requires all officials to speak Russian. Finomans at one time steadily resisted this encroachment; now they have the sense to see that unless they learn Russian, Muscovites will be put in their places, the country will be under Russian officialdom, and all the best posts in the hands of their conquerors.

Spies are said to abound, but I only came across one person whom I considered likely to occupy such an exalted position. Men who, through drink, idleness, or other misbehaviour, lose their employment may (if treachery be bred of such ill-conduct) be sure of obtaining work as Russian spies. They may also, if wit and some legal knowledge be added to the first three qualifications, be pretty certain to pick up a livelihood as hedge lawyers, and thus lay the foundation of much wealth. A peasant wants to win a cause perhaps not over righteous. If one of these shrewd outcasts from society comes along, he will drink with him, treat him, and at all events take him into social intercourse for the time being. If the cause be won by will, or quill, or wit, the poor wretch gains a reputation which

stands him in good stead. Money comes in, and as often as not he becomes a money-lender, and a trade of cent. per cent. soon enables him to obtain mortgaged properties, and wealth of one kind and another.

In the time of the Emperor Nicholas I. Jews who had served in the Russian army were allowed to settle in Helsingfors. They have, however, in Finland shared the odium they lie under in Russia, but this is now giving way to more enlightened ideas. The worst thing I heard in Finland was the way in which the clergy speak of the once Holy Nation, and of course, as an Englishwoman, I felt it both a pleasure, and a duty, to visit the school where these indefatigable and persecuted people teach their children. The school is largely supported by the Svekoman party, who, in this case, set the example of generosity and enlightenment. By a cruel law, no Jew may marry in Finland, unless he abjures his faith, nor may one after he has married abroad return to Finland. No new homes may be established.

Among the ladies of Jewish origin best known in Finland is a lady dentist, married to a Finn, and

a singer who is being trained in Vienna, and who is one day to astonish the world.

The social distinctions in Finland are few and insignificant, but Svekoman and Finoman keep apart, the difference of language having hitherto emphasised the difference of thought and custom. Finomans of course can speak Swedish, and will, probably, as years go on, mix more freely with, and gain more polish of manner and style from the other side. The old race of the courtly circle that formerly made the *entourage* of the Governor has almost died out, at least in the capital. The present Governor is unpopular, and such unpopularity does more to ruin the Russian cause in Finland than a dozen battles. It is a great pity that Russia, when choosing a Governor and officers for the archduchy, does not select persons likely to make her rule popular, and the government esteemed. The arrogance of some of the military men who lord it over the proud, reserved and sensitive Finns, gives a foreigner a very unfavourable idea of Russia and Russian society.

The nobles and burghers, in the Diet, are Svekoman, as a rule; the clergy and peasants

Finoman. The larger proportion of the clergy are peasant-born, and thus the Lutheran faith has its stronghold in the very roots of the people. It is the peasant class who fill the churches, and who *man* the schools (for women teachers are often of another class).

The Svekoman, when he goes to church in the country, rarely hears his own language, and therefore often stays away. But the Finns will sit for hours in the unwarmed edifices, which in winter and summer are packed to overflowing. At home the peasant devours eagerly the words of Luther, long ago translated into Finnish, and glories in his denunciations of popery, which, however, is otherwise an unknown religion to him.

Finland obtained its Lutheranism from Germany, *viâ* Sweden, but the first preacher of Christianity, its first bishop, was an Englishman. The Liturgy which in substance Finn and English alike use, is that handed down from the days of the early Christians.

If the term "High Church" can be applied to a communion which does not pretend to possess apostolic succession, the "Episcopal" Lutherans of

Finland may be so called, as far as ceremonial is concerned, for their ritual, vestments, and genuflections are most elaborate as far as regards the service of the Mass.

Though there are four classes which form the Diet, it must not be imagined that outside that assembly there is a sharply-defined social line between them. At all events, theoretically, man is man's equal in Finland, and to a certain extent the idea passes current that woman is very nearly man's equal. All educated persons, man or woman, are regarded as socially on a par, but some folk cannot hear without an ill-concealed shudder of matrimonial alliances between a "väl-borne," and some son of the soil, whose fertile brain has raised him to literary fame, or public eminence. A "high- well-born" dame still considers that she has conferred an honour on her spouse if she foregoes the title she inherits, to marry a burgher or peasant. Unmarried, she has no title, but married to an equal she has her own rank, which she forfeits if she makes a misalliance. The peasant of Finland is equal to our yeoman, or to the "*statesman*" of our northern counties. The

crofter of Scotland is on the same level as the "torper" of Finland, his "torp" and our "thorp" having a common linguistic origin.

The hired day-labourer, or "cossack," the farm-labourer, the "saxa," or petty trader, have their equivalents among our own villagers. But the word "saxa" shows how far the German trader has penetrated. The commercial traveller of Finland is invariably a German. English wares are comparatively unknown.

The peasant class is, as a rule, wealthy and intelligent. The pauper of Finland comes generally from the torpers, or the farm-labourers, occasionally from good but decayed families. Formerly an auction was held, at which the paupers were sold by the parish council to those who would board them for the smallest sum. Every year or so some one would undersell another, and thus the pauper—man, woman, or child—never was sure of a settled home. Now this practice is abolished, but the paupers are still boarded out, and are, as a rule, treated with the greatest kindness. But still the bread of charity—even State charity—is always hard.

The Poor Laws are controlled by the Diet, but every measure is subjected to the Senate.

Acts emanating from the Czar are presented by the Senate to the Diet. Bills initiated by the Diet are presented by the Senate to the Czar, together with the latter's own measures, if they are adopted by the Diet. The Czar has always the power of the final veto.

In 1894 the new Penal Code, which had been passed by the Diet four years before, at last became law. The late Czar, after he had affixed his seal to it, held back the measure illegally, owing to pressure from the Russian party, who demanded some alterations. These alterations were in the end softened down, and accepted by the Diet. The absurdity of the ancient code was always made use of by the Russians to prove the barbarous nature of the Finns, and this in itself was a reason for altering what was practically a dead letter. There was also the fear that possibly at some moment or other, if the Russians obtained enough power, the old code might be made an instrument of legalising abominable cruelty. But as matters stood, the death penalty had not been inflicted for fifty years,

and the orderly and law-abiding character of the Finn had rendered the ancient criminal code unnecessary and void.

With regard to her commerce, it will not be from lack of enterprise if Finland fails to make her mark in the trade of the world. Already her cotton goods, made in the water-worked mills of Tammerfors, are exported to Manchester. Her wall-papers go to Brazil. Her Sphagnum moss supplies our racing stables with litter (it is used in Finnish hospitals for dressing). Her wood-paper also comes to England, while her game, salmon, and butter are sent to Russia. Our own country, however, is also a large customer for the latter commodity.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DAIRY.

THE steam-dairy has been established on Admiral de M.'s property for about eight years, and has wrought a great change for the better in the condition of the poor. There are several steam-dairies in the country, and if railway communication were opened up with the north, a large number of them would speedily be started, and the natural resources of the country would be greatly developed. The price of laying the best railway in Finland, including the building of stations, and the sheds, etc. required, on the most complete scale, is four thousand marks a kilometre. A light railway is all that would be required, and probably such as were recently made in Ireland would amply suffice for the purpose. Iron has to be imported, and the Russians have lately much increased the difficulties

of the country, which is poor in all mineral wealth, by levying heavy duties on all raw materials imported. The country round Urdiala is remarkably ferruginous, but the quality of the iron is very poor. It is, however, hoped that, should a railway be made, the mineral resources of North-east Finland might be fully developed, and possibly the iron there may, as is expected, prove better in quality.

Finland possesses two and a half million of human inhabitants, and two million cows. "Be a cow, and you will be well taken care of; but a man or a horse has nothing to hope for," is the saying.

No doubt a great part of the prosperity of this bright little nation is owing to the fact that men, women, and children all take their share in tilling the fields and minding the cattle. The whole system of social economy turns on the fixed seasons, and on the necessity of devoting the long hours of summer daylight to agriculture and its cognate employments. In summer the bells call to work at 4 A.M., and disperse the labourers at 8 P.M. In winter the hours are from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M., and not merely are the hours different, but

the kind of work is different also. The sowing of the grain begins about the first week in August, and the ground is clad with rich green before the first snow falls. After this happens, nothing more can be done in the way of actual field-work, except laying manure, which is piled without stint on the surface of the snow, and gradually sinks in, to be spread as soon as the white covering melts in spring.

The cattle are generally housed about September. I went one day to see the new cow-house, or rather palace, on one of Admiral de M.'s farms. It is very lofty and beautiful, and everything has been done in the newest and most approved way to house 100 cows in luxury. The seventy-six then in stock were all in the milking-yard, and the only denizen of the palace was an infant bull, who had a sumptuous abode. We went into the loft, some 150 feet long by 60 or 70 feet broad. It would have made a magnificent room for a village dance.

The model cow-house has attached to it large stalls, in which the young calves are kept. The supply of milk is pretty even all the year round at

these farms, as the calves are generally born in the autumn and winter months, whereas the peasants prefer the spring calves. As the cattle do not go out till May, they have eight months' imprisonment, and they must hate the halter, though perhaps do not despise the good food of winter. The feeding and caring for the cattle give a good deal of labour, and besides this the two other chief occupations in winter are carpentering and attending to the forests.

Carts, hay-poles, gates, rakes, sledges, and furniture are all made during the winter months. If timber has to be felled, it is done in the winter. Transport is then greatly facilitated, for the sledges glide at a great pace over the even surface of the ground, making tracks in otherwise pathless and impassable roads. The timber is carried to the banks of the rivers, and floated down to the sea. It sometimes takes two years to get timber down from North Finland. The gates are always removed in winter, and the boats housed, as the snow would bury the former, and the lakes are frozen hard, which greatly helps the traffic.

The educational arrangements are in harmony

with the wants of the agricultural population. The children are free from school from June 1st to September 1st. Education is neither free nor compulsory, though no one is allowed to be married until he or she can read, and some of the most frequent jokes on this subject allude to the ways in which this rule is dodged and evaded by the dunces of the country.

The percentage of dunces, however, is very small, and though writing is only now beginning to be practised, reading is as usual as eating or drinking. The people read Luther's works, and consider them very deep; but, as I have said, it is rather difficult to understand what they find of interest in the diatribes against Roman Catholicism. There are scarcely any Roman Catholics in Finland, and very, very few "Greeks." The pastors are, for the most part, farmers of the glebe, and as they are to a large degree, in this generation, peasants' sons, it is natural that they should find the occupation congenial. The glebes are in many instances large, and the pastor may, if he likes, let them, which gives him time to attend better to his parish. It would hardly pay to let a small farm. Of course

the wife and children all share in these farm duties, and this gives a homely, pleasant interest to the family. When milk, grain, and firing are plentiful, the pastor is able to help his poor. Tithes are paid in kind, and the pastor gives out in church the hour and place when he will be in attendance to receive butter, first-fruits of grain, etc.

All this brings the earthly and spiritual matters into close connection, but as a rule the pastors have not much leisure time after preaching and attending the sick, for more than the christenings, weddings, and funerals of the parish.

The large forests on the glebe are all carefully guarded, and when a building has to be put up, or rebuilt, the pastor has to make a request to the authorities, who then generally have some of the trees felled and sold at auction, and the money realised is applied to the building or necessary repairs. Without these precautions there might be constantly opportunities of pilfering, and the forests would be endangered; and it must not be forgotten—though it took me some time to realise it—that the forests form the *sole fuel* of this far north country.

Some thirty or forty years ago, the Finnish Government imported a large number of Ayrshire cattle. They were presented in small groups to large landed proprietors. Some five-and-twenty years since there were several remaining on the farms. The success which attended the importation induced the Government later to repeat their enterprise, but the agent who was sent to choose the cows was directed not to pay more than fifteen pounds per head. Consequently he went only among the smaller farms, and bought only inferior cattle. These were sold by public auction, and fetched very large prices, quite beyond the means of the smaller landowners. Later again, when a large Scotch proprietor was selling off his stock, another attempt was made. The prices, however, were so prohibitive that only young bulls and heifers were obtained.

By some mischance, at the same time, tuberculosis appeared among the cattle thus purchased, and since then there has been no general attempt to buy from the same district. Still, the Ayrshire cattle seem to thrive here, though under conditions so different from those in their own country.

I have wandered very far from the steam-dairy, which I intended should be the subject of this chapter. All the plant is Finnish, with the exception of the separator, which is Norwegian. All the wood and ice used are of course procured on the spot, the beautiful lake yielding unending supplies of the latter. There were three women employed in the dairy of the Urdiala model farm, and also a lad, besides the machinist, who looked quite a young boy, but did his work well. The women, as is the custom of the country, wore white handkerchiefs tied round their heads, and very bright and nice they looked. The head woman was quite young, with a very comely face, and intelligent, energetic manner. Her duty was to receive every morning, between seven and eight o'clock, the milk for setting for the next day's churning. It is brought in tins and cans of all sizes, now by barefooted lads and girls, sometimes by carts, and in many instances it is sent from distant cottages by boat. One little girl brought it in a boat from a village at the far end of the lake, and I must just relate here how her father—who is now in prison for life—murdered an old woman, rather

than build a home for her. He had nearly finished the house, too, and there it stood by the side of the lake, but I don't suppose any one will touch it.

The girl's mother is working the torp or croft—for the terms are the same—and is making it answer, though it went to ruin in the man's time.

As each can is deposited on the ground, the dairymaid pours it into a large measure, and thence into a separator. She enters the quantity at once into the book belonging to the dairy, and into the book belonging to each customer. She also puts down how many litres of skim milk are wanted back. The pastor, for instance, sends all the morning milk, but not the evening milk, and he sells all the skim milk, as well as the cream. But one torper sent 105 litres, sold the cream and 50 litres, and got back 55 litres. In the accounts the amount he took back is deducted from the whole, and the balance is paid to him monthly. Each customer is paid according to the quality of the cream supplied, so a regular register is kept of the quality of the milk from each separate torp or farm.

From the separator the cream goes on to the

Pasteuriser, where by means of great heat the possibility of bacteria of any kind is rendered out of the question. The skim milk for the calves is subjected to the same process. Then the cream is placed in tall, narrow cans, and these are lifted into enormous troughs filled with ice, to wait till the next morning. The skim milk is then returned in the desired quantities to the customers, and the rest is given to the pigs. But the skim milk from the farms where there is no separator, and where the cream is hand-skimmed, is put into carts, and sent off to the nearest station, whence it is forwarded by rail to Tammerfors, which is known as the Manchester of Finland.

Tammerfors has about twenty thousand inhabitants. The milk is sold in a street running out of the market square. The day we were there we saw the children standing against the wall of the street, with their cans, waiting for the milk. The shop does not open till the train comes in, and the whistle is the general signal for a rush towards the door.

To return to the model-dairy. It is entered by a porch, which faces a well some feet farther off.

Water from this well is laid on to every part of the dairy, to secure perfect cleanliness. On the right of the main building there is a room in which the tin-pots and pans are kept while drying. Beyond this is the room in which is kept the tall can of *sour* cream. Butter made from sweet cream is not suitable for the market, and the greatest care has to be taken in making it sour. It depends entirely on the power of taste which the *mairin*, or head of the dairy, possesses, whether the butter is right or not. The "souring" is put into the cream after it has been Pasteurised, and a little too much or too little spoils the whole churning, or makes the butter of an inferior quality. Fortunately, at my friend's dairy, the *mairin* is such a clever person that the butter is always classed and paid for as the highest quality. If the "souring" is not perfectly fresh, a slight touch of oiliness is at once apparent in the butter, and that also would disqualify it from being first-class.

Next to the drying and souring-rooms comes the engine-room. There are pipes all round, and hot steam passes into the great troughs, where all the smaller wooden things are steamed, and scalded in

water, in order to render them perfectly sweet From here you turn into the large churning-room Two huge churns worked by steam stand in the centre. In the corner by the window is the separator, and next to it the Pasteuriser. To the right of the separator is the press in which the skim milk is pressed out of the butter, and the salt also is evenly distributed by it. There is also in this room a large trough and press for skim milk-cheese, but it pays better to sell the milk. In the next room again are the troughs in which the ice is washed before it is used, and others in which the cream of one night is stood while "souring," surrounded by ice.

Here also are kept the lactometers, by which the quality of the milk supplied by each torper, or farmer, or peasant is tested. Outside is the saw for sawing the wood necessary for the whole service of the engine.

If only by way of contrast with the very up-to-date dairy farming of Finland, I must just describe here the quaint, old-world method of drying hay which still prevails, for it amused me very much.

We stopped one day in a field to drink some

iron water from a chalybeate spring, and saw that the hay had already been gathered, and was stored in wooden log-houses, some half-dozen standing in a field of nine or ten acres. As we went on we passed another field in which the crop was in process of being dried on sticks like this The poles are some six feet high, with strong, straight branches fixed in round them. These latter hold the hay, which is piled on to, and between them, tapering down in shape a little, so that little or none of the hay touches the ground. Thus it dries very well, the central pole giving ventilation, and even in rainy seasons the hay dries on these odd-looking erections. After all, this method is not one to be scorned, for the labour is much less than that required for turning and raking, and then "cocking" it. These hay-poles are made in the long winter nights. Oats and tares are treated in the same way. Immense quantities of the hay are exported, but till it goes it is kept in the log huts when sufficiently dry, and these again have a curious look, as they are much broader above than below, a shape which shelters them from the snow.

Mead is a very useful and palatable product of the Urdiala farmeresses. Indeed, all sorts of drinks—non-alcoholic—abound there, as any sort of spirit is forbidden in the neighbourhood by the district council. One can understand, therefore, that the people have more to spend there than in most places. Once we saw a most astonishing spectacle in Finland—three soldiers mad drunk in a country cart! My friend told me that they do get mad with spirits, and then they are really dangerous to encounter, as they think nothing of stabbing you when they are thus beside themselves. We got past them, however, quite safely, as we met them in an open space. There was doubtless an inquiry made afterwards, as they must have obtained the spirits illicitly, and probably from some secret still.

On Saturday night all the soldiers from the reserve go home for Sunday, returning that night to camp. We often met little groups of them going through the forest—such handsome lads, with fair skin and blue eyes and straight noses. All the women's noses seem more or less tip-tilted —generally more!

CHAPTER VII.

NORTH-EAST.

OUR first trip took us north-east, with lengthening days at each northward step. Tammerfors, the "Manchester of Finland," was curious and interesting in its way. We dined above a rushing rapid (*fors*, in Swedish, means "rapid"), and we fed on the products of Finnish waters, trout, salmon, strömming (a kind of sprat), fresh-water crab, and on the wild duck, then in season. We had our tea later in the garden of the restaurant, where the water rushed and tumbled close beneath our feet. The practical Finlanders have turned the stream into a motive power, and spoiled its beauty. Perhaps as a native of the land of shopkeepers, I ought to have admired the utilitarian little place, and certainly we had an amusing time in going over the pleasure-grounds of the Nordbecks. They

are mill-owners, German by extraction, and hardly yet to be called Finlanders.

The garden was deserted, for the family, I believe, were in Germany, but we received permission to see the eagle erected on the site overlooking the fall, where two Russian emperors have stood, or rather sat, for the bench thus consecrated is still there. From this special point one can see how strong the current is, and can realise how easily accidents might occur. A barrier has now been placed to prevent the foolhardy from shooting the rapids, or rather attempting to do so. An accident happened in 1892, and the pleasure-boat, and all in it were lost—dashed to pieces just below the spot where we were standing.

The old man who showed us over the garden was quite dumfoundered when he heard I was from England. But on recovering from his astonishment he asked whether I knew Mr. Wells, and Mr. Haws (I think), who had been English heads of departments at the mills. He was sure they lived in London, and that they were very great gentlemen there. Then again, could I tell him if it was really true that we had a woman king

in England? "Woi, Woi!" was all he found to say to express his amazement, but subsequently he seemed much relieved to hear that she had three sons living. My friend interpreted as best she could, but his Finnish was a different dialect from that used in Urdiala, and she could not make out a long dissertation on the blessing of marriage, which would follow if we sat on a special chair. The chair, however, looked dusty, and seemed uninviting as matrimony itself. We were only allowed a hasty glance through one room in the factory, as patents and patterns are carefully guarded.

Next door there was a large paper-mill, paper being chiefly made from bark in Finland; very good paper it is, too, except what is used for books. Much is exported, England and Brazil being leading buyers.

We had a lovely steam down the lake in a puffing, panting little boat, which seemed to find the wood fuel very indigestible. The edges of the water were piled high with fuel, until we got beyond the reach of the town. We got out at a very pretty little restaurant some few versts off, and felt much refreshed after some tea, which was,

nevertheless, hundredth cousin once removed to the beverage we know under that name in England. All the same, we felt sufficiently energetic to climb the high ground behind the restaurant, and then go to the top of the "pavilion," or tower, whence there was a most lovely view over the country.

Tammerfors lies near two lakes, and the tongue of ground on which we stood stretched between them, and very bright they must be on a sunny day. Very pretty they were even as we saw them, grey and calm. Large saw-mills were visible in a suburb of the town, and altogether the little place looked alive and busy, though where the Manchester comes in it is hard to see, for the mills are scarcely on a scale to recall, even in miniature, those of our Lancashire city.

We wandered back slowly through the beautifully trim grounds, which are said to belong to Government, and reached our hotel ready for sleep, and then started the next morning on board a smart little steamer for a long day on the lakes.

There were on board a very rich peasant proprietor, an artist, several university men, easily recognised by the white caps and black velvet

bands (lady-students wear similar caps), a father, mother, and children going for a summer trip, and a large number of peasants or servants, either returning home with the week's stores, or going home for Sunday.

The first call we made was at a lovely place which will always remain in my mind's eye, for the bay into which we ran was exquisitely wooded, and the landing-stage led into a lovely forest walk, which I longed to follow.

I do not describe the lake scenery we went through, because its features are much the same in every land. There are indeed in Tavastland no mountains, but there are trees, waters, and skies. I use the plural in each case because the different foliage of the trees, the different depth and form of the waters, and the varied moods of sun and clouds—of sunrise, sunset, moonlight, and starlight, of wind and calm—give a wealth of beauty that nothing can surpass, and a variety of combinations that is quite unexpected.

The formula which I heard in England, as summing up the characteristics of Finland, sounded somewhat monotonous—"a land of lakes and bogs,

of forests, and boulders." But somewhere I have read in a book by Topelius—"Uncle Topelius," as the children here call him—a far more graphic account. He tells how the gods, in showering their best gifts on other lands, left poor little Finland out in the cold. There was no more warmth, nor sun, nor fertility, neither gold, jewels, nor wealth to give her. But Nature formed her fair indeed, and gave her lakes to mirror back what sun there was, and islands to rest in the bosom of each lake, and dowered her with a wealth of flowers, which makes the very earth smile again.

And truly any artist would corroborate the description. The rocks of granite, grey and lichen-grown, and manifold in shape, prevent the landscape from being tame. Now they are fringed to the very water's edge with luxuriant foliage, now they rise gaunt and unclothed, frowning and rugged in the midst of calm waters, and then reappear, like bits of fairyland, wreathed in dainty beauty, the home of lovely flowers, and sheltering in their creeks and inlets waters which remind one of the words: "There shall be no more sea, and no more death," only waters of life.

Once we came to a lock between two lakes, and the arrival of the steamer was evidently *the* event of the day. Only for three or four months of the year is communication thus kept up with the outer world. Then come the months when either the waters are deserted, because all summer visitors have flown, or because ice is beginning to form.

Patriotic Finns consider it necessary to know their own land first, and crowds of sightseers flock through the scenes, which are justly reputed fairest, where all is fair. Students travel too, in order to collect for their own museum whatever is of interest, as belonging to the history of their land, its customs, literature, and language. I saw the result of their labours later, in the ethnological museum at Helsingfors, though, indeed, much of their work no stranger can gauge. It is stored in MSS., which await printing, and which contain grammatical data for the philologist, and songs, folk-lore, spells, and riddles for the literary, or comparative philosopher.

The students on board our steamer sang some magnificent songs, Finnish and Swedish. The Finnish voice is capable of much cultivation, and

needs it. Uncultivated, it is overpowering in volume, and inharmonious. But when trained to sing in parts, the marvellous depth of the bass notes, even in some women's voices, makes you wonder where the next sound will come from. The compass of the voices, and of the music sung, seemed to me greater than is usual in England, and the part-songs appear difficult. Some of the music is quite beautiful, and the strains of the Björneborg March are most inspiriting.

Lately the Finnish regiments have been forbidden to march to the music of their own national airs. But if I had to command a Finnish regiment in the field, there is nothing I can think of that would inspire the gallant fellows to their highest efforts better than the strains of these, to them, so familiar and soul-stirring melodies. Perhaps it is well to avoid the exciting strains in time of peace, but what would happen in Ireland if we forbad the national airs to Irish regiments? In fact, when certain authorities recently tabooed "Rouse ye, Ulster," they took a leaf out of the book of the Russian prohibitions. But then, it was only English regiments that were affected by the restriction!

So, to the music of national airs and Swedish "drinking songs," we floated over the still waters, pausing to note the eager crowd at the landing-stages, and the rush from the villas as the steamer drew near, as well as the busy strawberry-sellers, who were only too glad of the few coppers thus gained.

The orthodox method of eating these tiny wild strawberries, when a spoon is not at hand, is to use a pin, and we were each provided with a good long one, and enjoyed our refreshment much.

Once we landed for a few minutes, to have a stroll while the vessel unloaded some cargo and took in fuel. We saw the peasant-proprietor's house, large and spacious, near the windmill at the top of a hill. Here too we left the artist, who was to sketch in the neighbourhood before returning to his studio in Paris, the city to which most Finnish artists turn.

A lady who was on board proved to be an acquaintance of my friend's, and she urged us very strongly to go farther north than we had intended, and to leave the picturesque little district south

of Tammerfors, where we had meant to go, for another time. So we studied maps, and decided to be undecided, and to let our course follow the windings of convenience, and the somewhat uncertain arrangements of local boats.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FINNISH RECTORY.

WE came to this decision just as we reached the landing-stage at Ruovesi, a little place noted, as I afterwards found, for four things—beauty of scenery, wealth of strawberries, good Finnish, and as one of the places connected with the life of Runeberg, the poet and inspired patriot of Finland. He wrote, or rather sang, in Swedish, and yet finds an echo in every Finnish heart.

We got into a tiny closed landau, with its owner, our kind hostess, whose acquaintance I had just made on the boat. She took us straight home round the lake, with a little pair of Finnish nags which went along at a famous rate. "Home" meant the Parsonage, and I had thus the chance of seeing a Finnish rectory in the very heart of the country. It was a huge, rambling wooden house,

reached through a lovely avenue, which reminded me of one on the far north-east coast of Ross-shire. The house stood high, and on the side towards the lake was almost lost in trees. Hops twined up the broad veranda, and small fruit bushes bordered the garden paths. Here and there one caught peeps of the lovely lake. Like most country houses, it was only one story high, and the rooms opened one into another. The house was reached by high steps and a porch, then came the hall, with the kitchens, and servant departments, and family bedrooms on the left. To the right was a lobby, or "tambour" as it is called, and I have often wondered whether the name came from the kind of work done in those special waiting or cloak-rooms, or whether they used once to be hung with such adornments.

The climate in autumn and winter makes both over-cloaks and over-shoes a necessity. These must be taken off before you venture on to the spotless boards, or into the hot rooms. So to every house there is such a lobby, near the entrance, where a brush and comb, and a clothes-brush, are also kept by these practical folk.

To the right of the "tambour" was the clergyman's business-room, with a door into the lobby. We, however, went into the large drawing-room, which would have been considered a well-proportioned ball-room in England. The floor was about to be relaid for our host and hostess, who had only just got the living, and it was not therefore a specimen of the latest improvements in that line. The room was furnished with black Russian furniture, upholstered in red. Some huge presses, valuable on account of their antiquity, and rescued from some cottage homes in East Bothnia, stood against the wall, and a grand piano occupied one corner of the room. The French windows opened on to the veranda, and busts of the great Finnish authors stood on high pedestals by the window. Later we found that the pedestals were blocks of wood smoothed and decorated by our hostess, with patterns worked in dough, and then whitewashed over. The trailing tendrils of the hops had served as a model, and quick wit had hit upon this clever plan for adding to the furniture of the spacious room. In Finnish fashion, the apartment was full of growing plants—quite a green-house in itself.

Opening from the drawing-room was a little room, with a large musical-box or organ in it, playing English airs. A writing-table, books, etc., made it look very cosy, but I overlooked the bed, which, according to the custom of the country, was contracted into a tiny space in the day, and looked like a tall crib piled with pillows. This proved to be my bedroom, but we were now taken into the inner room, where I was just unfastening my bags, and my friend beginning to dress, when the door opened, and the family, together with welcome tea, appeared on the scene. We were introduced to our host, who was the dark type of Finn, with deep blue eyes, and dark hair. To see him made one well realise the truth of the stories I had heard of his generous self-sacrificing nature. Whenever there was a duty to be done, which no one else would undertake, or a responsibility to be met, which no one else would face, then was he to the fore. It is indeed a crown worth having, the memory of such good deeds—and one which will be cherished long after he has passed away.

He came into this good living quite unexpectedly, having no interest and no special fame

as a preacher. But the parish was divided in the interest of two different candidates, and as the people could not agree which to choose, parties being so evenly balanced, they selected the only other candidate who, with his usual spirit of unworldliness, had refused to canvass. And so he became pastor of this huge parish, a rich one, but which now, on account of its size, had been divided into two, the revenues being, of course, divided also.

There is in every parish a "chaplain," who plays much the same part as a curate in an English village, only as the parishes in Finland are so enormous, the "chaplains" have much more independent work to do. There is also besides an "adjutant," to assist the clergyman when his work grows too heavy for him. Our host, however, had no need of an adjutant, for he was hale and hearty, though some of the children suffered from the "frossa," or malaria prevalent on the coast of East Bothnia, where he formerly lived.

After tea, and feeling much refreshed thereby, we went with our hostess and her sister into the grounds. Beyond the farm buildings were fields,

and meadows, and forests—hundreds of acres, forming the valuable glebe. This is generally farmed by the pastor himself. Very often the sons of peasants become pastors, and have a better knowledge of how to till and sow than of how to preach or teach. Our host, however, did not wish to take so large a burden on his shoulders, and he therefore let the farm land at a fixed rental.

Besides the farm produce, the parson gets paid in kind by his parishioners, and must have barns in which to store the grain, and a dairy for the butter. It is a curious life, "pastoral" in a double sense; and the wife of the clergyman, if she is a "proper woman," like our hostess, has a position of much importance in the parish, for she has the doling out of the hospitality and charity due from the clergyman. Charity also is distributed in kind, food and clothing especially, as fuel is always at hand. But to manage the receiving, weighing, storing, economising, selling, and giving of all these supplies, is a business in itself. A pastor's wife is therefore a busy woman, and the description in Proverbs xxxi. may be appropriately quoted as an epitome of the virtues required in a Finnish "Prostinna." She

must see to spinning, and weaving, dairy-work, needle-work, farm-work, cooking, preserving, and gardening, and, in the country, to the education of her children.

The friends with whom we were staying were devoted Finomans, and though the elders of the party spoke Swedish, the children were only allowed to know Finnish. Our hostess, and a sister who was staying with her, were daughters of a former pastor of Urdiala. The sister had married into a noble family, and was therefore a "Väl-borne." It is necessary to recollect these distinctions, even in Finland, where the good folk pride themselves on being Radicals, and you ought to know whether the untitled, but noble family to whom you address your letter is Swedish, or German, by extraction. Untitled German nobles like to be "Hog-borne"—Swedish ones are "Väl-borne." In titled families all the members are "Hog Väl-borne." The wife of any governor or highly-placed official in Russian service is an "Excellency," as well as her husband, and in Russia itself the daughters are also "Excellencies," but not in Finland.

Our friends were, as I have said, thorough Finomans, and we heard much enthusiastic praise of the young and aspiring generation who claim above all things "Finland for the Finns."

Again, as we wandered in the meadow hay, we revelled in the superb magnificence of the flowers. The campanulas, like glorified Canterbury bells which no garden could produce in England, spread purple sheets across the tall grass. Ox-eyed daisies, large as asters, filled the side-paths. And then the strawberries! How the little red heads nodded, not little in reality, for these were the long juicy kind, which is far better in flower, and more juicy in fruit, than the ordinary round one! As long as we stayed in the place we had large dishes (English joint dishes) piled high with them two or three times a day, and cream *galore* to eat with them.

The way we went took us to a brook, and an old mill. Horse-tail grass waved on the sloping bank behind the water, like a living tracery of green, making a lovely background to the gray weather-beaten logs of the building. In front the ground was carpeted with flowers, and forget-me-nots such

as I have only known in a deep ditch by a water-meadow, in the valley of the Orwell. Overhead nodded birches and pines, while through the air came the song of the stream.

Count Sparré, a Swedish artist who has taken Finland as his special field of art, and who has since married a Finnish lady of high birth, had been to this spot in winter, and made a study of it when the spring was silent, and snow hid the grass, and when for flowers there were icicles. It sounds like death, but a death so beautiful that it means a dream before resurrection.

Then back we came to wine and cake in the veranda, and later to coffee. But keep awake I could not, and I slept till supper-time, and afterwards, in the glorious night we sat talking till it was midnight. My bed, having by that time been elongated, I retired to it, and slumbered among pillows of down till I woke with the Sabbath's sun high in the heavens.

CHAPTER IX.

A FINNISH SERVICE.

CHURCHES in Finland have recently been capped with what a member of parliament is said to have called (much to the amusement of the House) coagulated iron! So the ancient wooden walls have this gray covering for their roofs, a covering which is said to be very serviceable, but is not particularly beautiful.

Leading to the Ruovesi Church, or rather in front of it, is a circular building, of which no one could explain the object further than that it was a waiting-house in bad weather, and that in it were also now stored odds and ends of what people in Finland call contemptuously "old-fashioned" things, but what we should term antiquities, and value accordingly. It is, however, sacrilege to sell such things, and they may only be removed to

the recognised museums, and cannot pass out of the country. I have since learned that in olden days there was always some kind of vestibule, in which, as the proverb says, "the King left his sword, and the slave left his axe," and the building at Ruovesi and similar churches is a "weapon-house." Every man went to church armed, but within all were friends. The church at Ruovesi holds four thousand, in a parish of twelve thousand. It was pretty full the Sunday we were there, though not crowded.

Before church we went round the graveyard. A vault belonging to a noble family had recently been opened to lay a daughter to her last rest. The monument was wreathed with green, and there were long white ribbons flapping in the air from some of the withered floral tributes. It is said that among the poor it used to be the custom to weep at weddings and rejoice at funerals. One of the wedding weepers still exists, and it is quite the habit of Finnish women to speak with joyful countenances of those "whom it has pleased God to take," almost in the tone in which in my own village home in England a good old friend of mine

once said of her ailing grandson, "I would it would please the Lord to take a liking to him."

In the towns things are managed much as in England, except that announcements in the local papers, both of births and deaths, are very differently worded from similar announcements in England. But in the country, where friends are often widely scattered, and where it may take days for a party to assemble, the coffin may be lowered into the grave sometimes as long as a fortnight or month before the funeral is really conducted by the clergyman. In cold winter weather it is often impossible to get a heavy coffin across the snowdrifts, but of course the necessity for immediate burial is not so great when the thermometer stands many degrees below (Fahrenheit) zero.

In a touching little picture of a child's burial, by a Finnish artist, a family group is shown. The sisters are singing the parting hymn before the coffin is carried away, though the parents cannot join in it. Always in church, as on this Sunday at Ruovesi, special thanks are offered for those whom God hath taken to himself, the departed being mentioned by name.

Very much in the Lutheran service as conducted in these country churches reminds one of the services in Scotland, in the far west, where the Gaelic-preaching minister and the grave precentor have much the same duties as in Finland. The latter, however, in Finland, is always supposed to be the ruling spirit, and is said to "hold the steer oar of the pastor's boat."

The dogs occasionally walk into the churches in country districts, as in the western Highlands, and the slow singing is very similar indeed to that of the Scotch kirks. The Lutheran churches, though, have always a painted reredos, and the altar-cloths are often very handsome. The priestly robe of black velvet embroidered in silver, and bearing on it the all-seeing eye of God, is very imposing, but is only worn on festivals, and at the Celebration of the Holy Communion.

This latter service is very solemn, the priest putting the wafer into the mouth of the communicant.

All these details are, of course, contrast with the bare simplicity of much of the service. The announcement from the pulpit of the place where the butter, and other tithes and gifts would be taken,

sounded somewhat quaint, and made one feel it is a good thing that in England the relations between priest and people are no longer, except in very rare cases, hampered by the knowledge that the priest either expects too much, or, in rare cases, too little, when he may be duped and defrauded, till he, in his turn, feels righteous anger. Another proverb, hailing from the times of tinder-lit pipes, says that the only thing a priest cannot have too little of is "tinder in his pipe."

Leaving church, after a couple of hours' service, which was closed by a double collection, one for a missionary object, and one for the poor (to both of which you should give *not less* than a penny!), we strolled down to see the people go home in the church boat. Often, later on, we saw these boats on a Saturday, starting for some distant church, each large boat crammed with some hundred passengers, and smaller ones, down to the little skiff that some solitary woman or child puts off in from a neighbouring shore. The large boats are built by the community of a village. The rich persons bring wood, the poor give their labour, and all who go in them take their turn at the oars. Before

getting back into the boats, the girls either slip off or tuck up their best skirts. Many change their bodices, and all remove their black silk kerchiefs, to be replaced by common ones, and the more thrifty denude themselves also of their shoes and stockings! Everything is folded carefully, and tied up in a handkerchief, with stolid indifference to the presence of onlookers, or to the shouts of their friends to "hurry up." The largest number of oars is about thirty-two, *i.e.*, sixteen-pair; sometimes a third person will sit between the rowers and lend a hand. Great care is necessary not to capsize these boats, as very sad accidents occur through hasty movements of the crowd on them, or through an unnoticed leak.

The sight of the boats going across the water in every direction, the splash of the oars, the sound of the voices breaking every now and then into singing, all this makes the scene one not to be easily forgotten. Steamers also add their contingent to the church-goers, but this is not always an advantage, as they frequently bring mere sight-seers who are out for a holiday, intent on drinking, rather than on worshipping. We turned away, passing the "fattiga gubba," or "poor man," who carved in

wood and painted, a one-legged old soldier or sailor, or a miserable being with some other affliction, and having a slot in his neck-tie, or in his raised hand, into which you can drop any more pence you may have for the poor; he is often to be found at a church gate.

Here we were, in the house in which Runeberg used to dwell as a tutor. There is the birch-tree, with a ladder up to it, into which he used to scramble when he wanted to write. But up it we were not allowed to go, as it is too rickety for use. The house was let to the local doctor, and he and his wife gave us coffee. A room—a kind of "front parlour"—was arranged in much the same style as you would expect to find in such a room in England, combined with polished floors, crowds of growing plants, and some rather artistically-copied photographs in neutral tint washes.

Later in the afternoon the pastor took us across the water, again sailing his own boat, to a little grove called "Runeberg's Spring." Here we drank some very pure water, where the poet used also to drink, cups, according to the custom of the country, being improvised out of birch-bark. In-

deed, the birches all through the land are scored in rings ; whoever passing wants a cup, or a basket for flowers, berries, or mushrooms, takes from the birch, and suits himself as to size and shape.

So we drank to our hearts' content, and no doubt pious Finlanders find, as the proverb says, "water from a birch-cup in thine own land is better than beer from a golden cup in a strange land." We had, however, secured some of the inspiring water for a girl who craved the poetic gift, and our enthusiastic friends lifted high their cups, and sang Runeberg's verses till the clouding sky reminded us we had much to do.

But before we turned back our host said he would trace the course of the spring, which he did successfully with a birch twig. Indeed, so successful a water-finder is he known to be, that his journey was paid, not long ago, to a place far off in East Finland, where no waterspring could be found, and he succeeded in obtaining a large supply. He discovered his own power quite accidentally, under circumstances just similar to those we then witnessed. But none of *us* developed "finding" powers ; alas! when we held the twig together with him, the impetus was so overwhelmingly

against us, that the twig split in turning downward.

We were going home, when the old church clerk, whom I had noticed in church on account of his venerable countenance, asked us to step in and

CLERK OF RUOVESI AND HIS WIFE.

have tea. Thus we saw his charming house, his beautiful flowers blooming in the rooms—geraniums, myrtles, gloxinias, fuchsias, and several foliage plants—caladiums, dracænas, etc. We told his wife that we were wandering round the country

to see the beautiful scenery, and she said that we ought to go to her son and daughter-in-law in "the Wilderness." The Wilderness, my friend explained, meant the heart of the country. And what should we see there? A lake, was the reply, such a lake as was nowhere else to be seen, and Count Sparré had spent months there. It certainly seemed worth while to go, so bidding good-bye to the kindly couple and their family, we went on to watch the sunset from another high position, and then back to the parsonage, full of plans for seeing the "Wilderness" lake.

Next day a tremendous storm threatened to upset a little private steam-launch which the chaplain had sent for us to take us to his house many miles away. Our hosts would not hear of our venturing, and we had to give it up, though horses and dinner were in waiting for us on the other side.

Instead, we made up our minds to go by land in the direction of the Wilderness, and after saying good-bye to our kind host and hostess and the pretty rectory, we exchanged their comfortable carriage for a country cart at the first posting-station, three miles farther on.

CHAPTER X.

TO THE WILDERNESS.

NOW we really felt started on our journey, and the little springless cart, with rope reins, was quite in keeping with the picnic arrangements we desired. Our ancient driver was not communicative, and the lank, black pony was none of the best, nor yet of the worst, the country could produce.

Our way lay through a long forest ravaged here and there by fire. The mosses along the road were beautiful, and indeed everywhere in Finland where I went I saw much beauty on the ground, not merely in the way of flowers, but of leaves, some of which lie by me as I write, still glowing as when first gathered, and sprays of moss which are long feathering trails of marvellous loveliness. The lichens and fungi add purples, yellows and reds, in every shade, so that the artist's palette might soon

be exhausted in painting these rich carpets of gorgeous colouring.

We jogged along, noting by the way the sign-posts which tell on whom each piece of the road depends for mending. No wonder the proverb says, "The road depends on the landowner," but of course the parish officials see that the road is properly kept by those to whom it is apportioned, as running through or near their properties.

The evening was growing late when we passed a long, desolate bog, and then we found ourselves at our post-station. We paid off our driver, and after some difficulty got hold of a woman, head servant, mistress *de facto*, and general scrub of the establishment. She said, "Yes, we might deposit our things in the guest-house, but she couldn't attend to us just then, as there was a wedding party finishing up their entertainment." The finishing-up had certainly rather a rowdy sound about it, and we could find no master and no real mistress, no dinner and no beds. So we wandered off, and presently heard shouts, and clink of balls—ah, ninepins! No doubt the master was there, and we ventured up through the fir grove to a raised ground

with a summer-house, and a huge ninepin or "skittle-ground," and bowling-green.

A group of men, somewhat bewildered by the appearance of two ladies, hung back, unwilling to make the first advance, and it was some time before my friend could induce the master of the post-house, a tall, handsome, young man, with bright blue eyes, and golden hair, to realise that she had a letter for him from the Pastor of Ruovesi. It was written in Swedish, alas, and what a time it took them to make it out! At last a round-about, swaggering little fellow, a trifle bolder or more conceited than his mates, addressed my friend in fairly good Swedish, and, anxious to show off his accomplishment, inquired what the gentlefolks wanted. By this time the master had realised what was expected of him, and coming up, cap in hand, was very polite and promised every comfort he could provide. So we said dinner was the comfort we most desired just then, and beds afterwards, and could we row to the Wilderness that evening? No, it would take three hours, and already the good folk would be in bed.

So, while dinner was being got ready, we strolled

along to where a new bridge was being built, the operation putting an end to the large steamers plying up the lake to Virdois that year. A tiny steamer, however, was just managing to scrape through the narrow channel by the very skin of its teeth, and much interest was felt as to whether a lady-photographer who was staying in the same shelter as ourselves were on board or no, with the results of her work in this very wilderness for which we were bound, but apparently she had not caught that steamer.

On we went, enjoying the evening air, and the novelty of the place. While looking over a gate which led into a farmyard, we were espied by an old woman, who told us to come in. "What!" she exclaimed, "an English lady! Why, my son has been eight years in England, but he is away to-day. He would have been so happy to talk English," and so she chattered on till, feeling that we could wait no longer for our prandial meal, we strolled back, to find some good potatoes, some bread, delicious milk, a couple of eggs, and some uncooked fish which, even when cooked, was too odoriferous, and then came refreshing coffee.

We hoped at least for a good night's rest, and a start at five the next morning, but, to put it mildly, the feather pillows must have been cured with asafœtida ; we threw them to the other ends of the rooms, but the odour clung to everything, and morning came just as we had fallen asleep.

When I saw the clouds thick and the rain falling, I dressed first and then, as the sky cleared, woke my friend and sallied forth with my first Finnish sentence, inquiring whether the boat was ready. The answer was certainly not in the affirmative, but was otherwise incomprehensible, so I got the woman, who was kindly and communicative, to come and talk to Miss de M. "Yes, the house had once borne a good name for comfort and cleanliness, but that was in the old people's time. The son was in America, and the daughter was always doing her hair, and the master who rented the house only kept it till the son came back, and he did not care to make a good thing out of it. Yes, perhaps it was for him the girl plaited her hair." The charge for food and lodging, and service for two, was barely eighteen pence, so we were not ruined !

About 7.30 the boat was ready, and, fortified by some more good coffee, we started on our way. The wind was cold, the morning grey, and the waves rolled us about a good bit; but still it was all quaint and novel, and we enjoyed thus travelling by rowing-boat very much indeed. The lights and shadows of clearing day also occupied my attention, and it seemed a blessing to sit still and do nothing but drink in the beauty of the scene. Here and there the water near the banks was deep red, and when we swept into a narrow strait between two lakes, Visuvesi and Virdois, it was beautiful with pink water-sorrel, and then, turning sharp to the left, our boat bumped against the stones of the bright little river which was to take us up to the Wilderness.

As we jumped out of the boat brilliant gentians caught my eye on the green grass, and they were visible in every direction. Then we went up to the farm, thinking that here at least, with the parents' introduction, and with news of them so lately for the son, we should be welcome. But no; for two days that week the little steamer we saw scraping its way under the bridge had been up to the

Wilderness with parties of fourteen, who had eaten everything there was that was eatable. "Well," we said, "could we drive on?" No, there was no road till you had walked twelve versts; besides, now we were there we must see the wonderful lake. How should we get there? An hour's walk and then half-an-hour's rowing would be necessary. How were we to get away, even if we accomplished the hour's walk each way? The boatman shook his head. He could not row us back, his hands had become inflamed with constantly rowing heavy boat-loads of tourists, and he must eat his breakfast before he could tell us whether he could show us the way to the lake, and row us upon it.

So we asked for milk, and of this there was plenty—sweet, light and refreshing—a great treat after the heavy, rich English milk, of which one tumbler always seems too much. Glass after glass vanished with scarcely a pause between each, and then we "concluded" to eat wild strawberries while our friend of the inflamed hands made up his mind, poor fellow; and, as there was something out-of-the-way in having an English lady to talk about, he finally decided to take us.

He was refreshed, having been able to consume his ordinary food—the marvellous bread, that looks so like hard iron rings, rather larger and broader and flatter than quoits.

The sun was really hot, and the midges, for the only time that summer, were troublesome, and tired after our bad night, and somewhat hungry, we started for the forest walk. It was not easy going, but there was so much beauty round us, and we saw so many tempting things to gather, that the way seemed shorter than it was in reality. In one place the torrent rushed foaming white over its own black waters, and is appropriately termed "Hell Stream," from the region it is supposed to drain. But the winding path through deep meadow grass, and across slippery granite excrescences, and empty but muddy stream-beds, led us to our goal.

Then we went on to the lake; the most weird, isolated and melancholy tarn imaginable. Overhead at first the sky was blue, but the waters beneath us were of horror-striking blackness. High granite cliffs shut us out from the world, cliffs which there was no chance of scaling, as they shot up, sheer and

precipitous, to the clouds that gathered black with coming storm.

The boatman was determined to give us the whole benefit of its horrors, and a full view of "Hell's" mouth. At the far end of the lake we got out, but after scrambling some way up the narrow gorge, my limbs refused to drag me, and my friend did not go much farther. Our guide did not approve. We had not seen the boiling, angry stream, and he thought us faint-hearted tourists. But so tired and oppressed were we, that neither of us could speak, and I fell asleep ere we reached land.

If ever a place were haunted, that lake must be such a spot, for the feeling of desertion and unutterable depression was almost unbearable, and one can well imagine a wild, weird, restless spirit seeking rest and finding none, but flitting ever across the black waters, its cries reverberating from the relentless rocks, which echo but answer not. I have not yet seen Count Sparré's picture, but to do justice to so much beauty, and yet give therewith the profound and thrilling loneliness, is a task in which but few artists could succeed.

Back we walked, gathering flowers, buying berries and eggs, and hoping at least for barley porridge. But to our surprise the hospitable board veritably groaned beneath fish and bird and berries, cream, barley-porridge, and the delicious "*fil bunke*," which, like the *Ben Jean* of the Manx farmhouse, is always at hand. In the Isle of Man curds and whey are turned sour with a special herb, but in Finland sour milk only is used. It was a royal meal, and when we had feasted, we threw ourselves on the delicious hay-stuffed mattresses, so sweet after the horrors of Kaivos, and slept for two happy hours.

Then came coffee, and with it the question of what to do next. We both shuddered at the thought of returning to Kaivos, and I had a sudden desire to go to Virdois. "Virdois!" said my friend; "but what then?" "Etseri, and then home by rail." So we determined, as the good master Villenius promised to row us across, that Virdois should be our next station, and shaking hands with the good wife Villenius, and thanking her for all the good fare and clean comfort of the little home in the Wilderness, we stepped into a

boat, bidding farewell to our friendly guide, who was to row himself back to his home at Kaivos.

"May God change the wind before I row home again," said the old woman, as she rowed against the wind. The proverb hits off the simplicity of the people, but they are generally more acute than the good old lady, and have wit enough to laugh over her blunder, which nevertheless is one many of us make when the winds and waves of life are against us. We turn round ourselves, and then are astonished when waters are smooth, and the stream flows peacefully with us.

CHAPTER XI.

BEYOND THE WILDERNESS.

THE Isanta Villenius now took charge of us, and rowed us up Virdois waters. This is again the typical island-filled, forest-bordered lake, which requires sunlight, or sunrise, and sunset light to show its full beauty. We had neither; still, the varied shades of fir and birch, the different effects of passing clouds, of distance, of calm or breeze-tossed waves and trees, were very fine, and I enjoyed the trip much. The torps (crofts), the freeholds, and the richer peasants' houses, gave life to the scene, and now and then boats, chiefly rowed by white-kerchiefed women and their children, brought whole families back from the hay-making.

At last we reached a rather desolate shore, and said good-bye to our somewhat consumptive,

narrow-chested, and coughing boatman. The difference of his rowing from that of our former guide was very marked, and it was a cloud on the pleasure to think that the wind and the showers which now fell, might make the poor fellow worse.

"Barking dogs never bite," says the proverb, and "Barking dogs are good, and quarrelsome women bad." These sayings are so often reiterated in connection with each other that finding the barking dogs very numerous we might have concluded quarrelsome women to be so also. But we had no opportunity of judging whether this were so; here the old woman whom the savage barks of her dog brought to us certainly was most kind and hospitable. We said "Paiva," or "day," short for "good-day," and shook hands, as was proper, with her as the house-mistress, or emanta. At first we inquired for a horse and cart, as all post-houses are bound to supply travellers with the means of getting on to the next house, at a given and very small tariff. If you happen to be the second comers, and the fresh horse has already been sent out, you must, if the demand is made, pay double, but even so, the charge is infinitesimal.

The post-master or mistress has the right to requisition the horses of peasants when it is necessary, and they have to give up their field labour, whatever it may be, to drive the traveller. This is not much of an inconvenience as yet, for travellers by post-chaise are not numerous, students generally preferring unbeaten tracks, and foot journeys. We were also quite out of the track of ordinary sight-seers, and it was unlikely that any English person had ever been in the district through which we went after leaving Ruovesi.

The emanta sent off to get a horse for us, but the isanta, or master, was out at work, and it might be some time before we obtained what we wanted. We asked for some milk and sugar to eat with our strawberries, and presently she brought us what she apologised for as a scant supply, but it was over a pint of thick, delicious cream, and we rested and enjoyed ourselves. When we asked for our bill, it was nothing. We pressed the good soul to mention the charge for the cream, and at last she said, "Five penni," not quite a halfpenny.

We were allowed to go into the large "stuba" or dwelling-room, and sleeping-room. My friend

immediately exclaimed, "Oh, this is too clean for Tavastland! Are we in East Bothnia?" she added uneasily.

"Yes," said the woman vaguely, "this is Vasa-land."

It was not quite what my friend liked to hear, for Eastern Bothnia has a bad name. Knives are whipped out when beer goes in, and she did not like the idea of travelling there late in the evening, on unknown and unfrequented roads. I have, however, since been assured by dwellers in these districts, that it is painted worse than it is, and that bad though it must be acknowledged to be for drinking and fighting, no lady would be in danger there.

However, we learnt on inquiry that our first alarm was needless also, because "Vasa Län" is *not* in East Bothnia, though just out of Tavastland, so Miss de M. was right as to the condition of the room. Everything was bright and polished, and floor and windows, and tables and benches, clean and fresh. Shy working lads and girls came in and sat down on the bench that went round the room, waiting for their porridge. A tailor was

sewing busily with an American "Singer," and we looked at the good, lasting garments made of homespun. The season of weaving was not yet, as all hands were wanted in the fields, so only one or two looms were to be seen in use. A woman who is not hardy enough to help in the field-work, sometimes keeps the loom up all the summer, but it is generally taken to pieces and put away, with the spinning-wheel, until after St. Bartholomew's day, and even then, as shortening days would necessitate much candlelight, little is done at the loom until after Candlemas, February 2nd.

A recent novelist has pointed out what a marvellous revolution has been effected by the introduction of cheap oil-lamps, and how they are the herald of book-learning, and hand-craft. They certainly are precursors of civilisation, but it was in the long dark evenings that the old people sang, and the children learned the runos of their fathers. It is doubtful now whether anyone will have the patience to learn them. There is something very suggestive of brooding and magic incantation in the torch-lit cottage, when the flare of the turpentine in the summer-dried splint is the only

light to waken the shadows. Fancy a child's delight in having to replace the bit of wood which burns out every ten minutes or so. Then the sparks whizz in the bucket of water placed beneath it, or have to be damped out as they fall on the wooden floor. I saw a charming tableau later on of such a cottage, which made the whole thing very real to me.

But it was getting late, so we shook hands, bade farewell, and started for the next station. There were forty-seven versts to the first railway station, and we did not know how much we should get through that day, but the next post-house was only half an hour's drive ahead, and thither our little nag, and a very small white-haired lad drove us. Quitè unexpectedly we came upon a lake known as Toriseva, a strip of water as weird and strange as that of Helvetinjärvi, or the hell waters already described. It was a deep, black, narrow strip of water, with precipitous granite cliffs rising sheer from the level of the lake on the right, and the shore on our side, shelving down to it from the road, narrowed its channel. The mist of silver rain, which swept across it as we passed, was just the

touch to enhance its beauty, which is as mysterious as the general landscape of the country is idyllic and peaceful.

Our hostess at Virdois, where we next found ourselves, was a step higher in life than our various isanta and emanta friends. She was a "Madame," and owned quite a palatial guest-house. We chose a charming room off the central saloon. The windows stood open, and it was sweet and fresh. The Madame knew how to persuade, and we felt that it was too late to venture farther, and out of tales of salmon-trout to be caught, and "factories" to be seen, and other attractions, which she skilfully dangled before us, we built up a castle in the air.

It was still only Tuesday, and it was Monday night that we slept at Kaivos. The long day from early morning till late evening, spent on the lakes, or in the open air, made us ready for sleep, and we had plenty of time before us. The queer, stuffed toy horse, the photographs of "Madame" in various stages of prosperity, the lovely plants, and a good supper, gave us plenty to consider. And then we slept.

TORISEVA.

And while we slept, it rained in torrents, so that we woke to a new and much refreshed world. Our first business was to see the church, a four-domed building. There is an ante-chapel, with some realistic sacred paintings, which are banished from the church as "old-fashioned." Some really fine ancient brass chandeliers are permitted to light the sacred edifice, but if someone gave new ugly ones, these old ones would be locked up with the other old-fashioned relics, which we could not see. "Only two and a half versts," said Madame, as she saw us off for Kahilla factory, and a trout stream. "Half-an-hour's drive," we said to each other, and jauntily and gaily we went off in an Åbo cart, which, when not well swung, is a torture of tortures, and makes you feel as if you had raced for miles, and had a stitch in your side you would never lose. Trillas (or 'rillas, as the good Finns, who cannot pronounce two consonants at the beginning of a word, call them), though heavier, are more comfortable.

Gradually it dawned upon Miss de M., as verst after verst went by, that Madame had meant Swedish versts. It is nearly ninety years since Swedish versts were supplanted by Russian ones,

and yet the Conservative peasant still counts by the Swedish mile. But it did not much matter, for the way was pleasant, and time of no importance.

VIRDOIS CHURCH.

The morning lights after the night's rain would have fascinated a painter. There was always red in the foreground, among the rich green. On this particular drive the reeds were either a ruddy brown among the rushes, or the water was red by the shore, or the houses were red among the fir-

trees. Then the blue expanse of the water rippled away into bluer distance, set in the rich forests which shimmered at their edges with birches, and toned down into a deep background of fir-trees. And all the while the tender morning light was radiant with a beauty of its own.

On our road we saw a tiny little pauper peasant, with poverty and trouble written on her brow. There she stood, in variegated rags, on the border of a lovely stretch of forest land. Her lank hair escaped from her weather-stained kerchief. Startled, like a half-starved kitten, she made a deep salaam, Indian fashion, which my friend told me is peculiar to North Finland, and then stood motionless in wonder. No doubt she was one of the poor little waifs who are sold by auction at the "guardians'" meetings to the lowest bidder—that is to say, as I have explained elsewhere, to the family who will take least for the keep of the pauper. The lot of such children is not quite as hard as it might be in a less honest country. But still, though not often overworked, the little waifs have a hard time of it, for if next year some one offers less, it is the guardians' duty to pass them on

to the cheapest house. When this is reached, at last the waif may settle down, if it be possible, and rest assured that she will not be moved again.

Among the adventures of that day fishing did not find a place. We had come unprovided with tackle, and however willing our hosts, no such thing was to be found in the neighbourhood. Salmon-trout from the stream at the door, and of the best, we ate, it is true, but no fly had ever been tried in those waters, and the hope ever before us found no realisation. We drank mead, made pleasant friends, inspected a factory, and drove through lovely scenery.

Towards evening I had a silent walk through a forest pathway that, like a cathedral aisle, breathed holy thoughts, and was balmy with the incense of flowers. My Finnish guide led me to the church of Etsen, which had only recently been built of brick. The only interesting thing in it is a beautiful antique brass candlestick, the branches of which covered the whole of the small altar. Its curves were so beautiful that I would fain have had a copy, but could in no way succeed in getting one. An ancient lamb, with that strong resemblance to

a horse so noticeable in Swedish tapestries, was over the pulpit.

A visit to the village shop was unsuccessful. There were no photographs, and no pretty aprons. I do not think I have said enough about the wonderful variety and splendour of the aprons worn by all classes in Finland. They are quite worth bringing back to England, as they make table-covers, chair-backs, small window-curtains, if adjudged too gorgeous to be worn in their original capacity. They are mostly of hand-woven cotton.

After this fruitless quest I went back to my friend, who had been too tired to walk, but I found she, too, had been enticed out, and on to the lovely lake, and had been listening to an old soldier's story of privation and suffering.

The post-station where we were was also, as it happened, the post-office, and the "postillion" was a woman, the daughter of the house, who seemed, according to public opinion, to be much demented. She, however, walked her twenty miles a day, and transacted her business admirably, and I see she has lately obtained a pension.

So here, in the morning, we caught the train

from Vasa, and turned homewards, meeting, wonder of wonders, an Englishman, who, on his part, had not met a fellow-countrywoman for months. He kindly gave us books, and entertained us, till we left him to pursue his way to Åbo.

CHAPTER XII.

SAIMA CANAL.

Our second trip in Finland took us eastwards. The weather had been bitterly cold, the frost having cut off much even of the oats in the neighbourhood of Urdiala. So we started well-provided with wraps, though hoping that the weather would change. Our luggage, however, was light—a bag and a roll for each of us.

The only place of interest we passed was Tavasthüs, and this I determined to see a little nearer on the first opportunity, and later I spent some pleasant days there. It is so beautifully situated, beside a miniature lake, that an artist would find here plentiful material for lovely sketches. It is a spot that might well have legends and old-world tales attached to it.

The remainder of the journey to the junction of

Rihi-mäki, where we expected to be joined by two English ladies, had no special interest, only we noticed along the roadside that the juniper-trees here grew in fine pyramidal forms, instead of low in scraggy bushes. My friend remarked that she thought wherever brick-fields were seen in the vicinity, this particular form of juniper was to be found. Probably, therefore, it grows thus on clay soil only.

At Rihi-mäki it was dark and cold, and we were glad to get some hot tea, though we put off our dinner till ten, when our friends would join us, and we could have a good meal before sleeping the night away in the train. But just as we were sitting down, and sipping our glasses of tea, in walked our two friends. English is as yet so little heard that three English ladies in a wayside inn made quite a sensation, and the passengers, who were also waiting for their train, were much amused. Our friends had caught a "local," and came to talk to us, instead of waiting for the Petersburg mail train. While we sat there a train full of Russian officers and officials came in and filled the room, going to a separate table at the

end. I could not help noticing the haughty air which they assumed in this subjugated country. It did not make a favourable impression on me, and is certainly very different from their manner in their own land.

Rihi-mäki is the junction for Helsingfors, and for the watering-place Hangö, south-west of Helsingfors, to which many Russians go, and also for Tavasthüs, where there is a Russian garrison.

We watched the Russians for a good while, and then had our own dinner, wrote various postcards, and discussed plans. It appeared that our friends were very half-hearted about our projected trip. One was ill, and both felt the cold, and wished to go straight to their home in Petersburg, where we were afterwards to join them, but nothing was decided.

The night in the train made us glad we had brought rugs. We debated as to whether we should each take a berth in a sleeping-carriage, which costs here about 4*s.*, *i.e.*, 5 marks. But the matter was decided for us, for no more berths were free, the train being crowded to excess, and very

comfortable we found the linen-covered seats of the second-class carriages. These linen covers have been used ever since the cholera time of 1892, and are now always to be found on the railway between Petersburg and Helsingfors. The trains are not warmed in August, as such weather as we were having is exceptional. The carriages, however, are so substantial, that there is really no need of much heat except in winter. We were quite warm and comfortable, and woke refreshed an hour or two before we reached Viborg.

Here, again, the wind might have come from an iceberg. We had tea and coffee, and got some hot water from the refreshment-stall, as no one was to be found in the waiting-room, and had time thoroughly to dust and refresh ourselves. We then walked through the town, and observed the first traces of Russian influence. A large Greek church faced the waiting-room, and *isvotshiks*, in Russian dress, drive the minutest of droskies. But we were too cold to drive, and we walked in the direction of the ancient castle, which was, and still is, one of the best-preserved of all the castles of Finland. It is constantly repaired, but though in

very good order, it is not likely to withstand any heavy guns of modern calibre. The town, however, is strongly garrisoned by Russian troops, and as we passed under one of the ancient portcullis arches, and across the bridge and moat, towards the second and outer wall, we heard the sound of drill, and also a long and echoing Russian hurrah, which certainly lacks English vitality and heartiness. It seemed rather as if uttered to order, for spontaneity is the last thing to be expected from a Russian soldier. There was no one in sight to ask what the cheering was for, so we turned back up into the town. We had to go up, it being built on hills, which are steep, while all the roads are paved with kidney stones, and we did not get on very fast. The shops in general were not open, for it was quite early, and the only one we wanted we found easily. An "apotek" is easy to find in every town and village, and he is generally qualified to give advice when there is no doctor within call. In the villages the "apoteks" seem to flourish, and grow rich, to judge by the size and grandeur of some of the houses we saw. In a country community the "apotek" is quite an

important person, and together with the clergyman, doctor, if there is one, and schoolmaster, is supposed to belong to the upper social grade, and should be invited at least once a year to the "big house" of the chief resident.

Indeed, if a landowner is willing to do so, he may make himself very popular, if he and his family join this social circle on all "name-days" and festivities, and he invites the members in return to his own house. The profession of apotek's assistant is occasionally undertaken by girls of good family, if they can pass the necessary examinations, which are not difficult. But as such a career involves much isolation, and sometimes rough living in the districts far removed from the larger towns, it is not so frequently chosen by girls as clerkships, and school or post-office appointments.

At the apotek's at Viborg we obtained something to relieve our friend's headache, which afterwards proved to be premonitory of influenza, and then got a very light breakfast at the hotel; nothing, indeed, but bread and butter, and coffee, for the whole staff seemed to have gone to sleep

for ever, and the electric bell only called up a distant telephone-voice, which came like a ghost through the room.

Our next move was into the market-place, which was crowded to overflowing, and the stalls of which, in one part, were grouped round an ancient building, which was supposed to have formed at one time a portion of the castle walls. We were in a hurry to catch our boat, which whistled for starting just as we stepped on board. The only other deck passenger was an officer, who lent his waterproof to my invalid friend, to keep her warm.

The sky was blue, and the water of a surpassing vivid azure, and no wonder, for we were now on the Saima Canal, which, with the lake whence it takes its name, is renowned for the exquisite blueness of its waters. The branches of this canal extend in every direction, and there are charming villa residences on its banks. One old house belongs to a Russian family long settled in Finland. It is beautifully placed among the pine forests on the border of the lake, and has a large pavilion some little way off, from which an extensive view may be obtained. The family burial-

ground is on an island standing off the shore, a picturesque and quiet spot, where no outsider is allowed to enter.

The wind grew colder and colder, but the scenery was so lovely that we could not go under shelter. Presently we came to first one lock and then another, with villas built near them, and landing-steps crowded with village folk, who use their canal as the great highway to Viborg, or the places beyond, towards Willmanstrand. We also could have gone on this way to Imatra, but the journey is more expensive, and Miss de M., who had travelled by this route, wanted to try the new railway line. So we only went as far as a charming place called Runolinna, or the "Castle of Song," where she had friends.

How lovely it was as we left the steamer, and wandered among the pine-trees, over the hilly path, the ground red with cranberries, and shining with the dark glossy foliage of the plant! The big house on the top of the hill was let for the summer to a rich Russian family, but we found the children, whom my friend wanted to see, living in a cosy little cottage, which had originally been built

for a laundry. The parents were also absent ; but the little fellow of six was quite equal to the occasion. He showed us the short cut to some friends who lived in the next villa, about a verst distant.

One of the greatest of modern heroes in Finland lives here. He was highly placed in official circles, and was celebrated for his integrity and intelligence. When, however, he found that the Russian Government was overriding the laws of the country, and infringing its constitution, he resigned his office with all its emoluments, as his constant and urgent remonstrances failed to procure justice. His wife and daughters entertained us very kindly, and ordered tea and coffee for us. So we left our tired companions to partake of their hospitality, while Miss de M. took me off to see a spot she wanted to revisit, whence a lovely view was to be seen.

It was on the other side of the Runolinna property, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ versts off, and we had to hurry for fear of missing the steamer. Our little guide was again to the fore, running on in front, warning us of damp or rocky paths, and instructing us carefully

not to leave the straight road, lest we should lose ourselves. Once, while we were saying what a lovely summer residence this would make for any Englishman who wanted real rest and quiet, we called little Tutti back to ask if he knew the rental of the house for the summer. We did not the least expect him really to know such a thing, but he replied quite calmly :—

"Most things I know, but of this I have not informed myself!"

Presently, after a somewhat rough and scrambling walk through the usual forest scenery, we came to a "pavilion," as the little covered summer-houses are called, whence we looked down from a giddy height on to the blue waters glistening in diamond brightness below. Opposite us were other high granite rocks, such as that on which we stood, clothed to the water's edge with rich fir, birch, and undergrowth of bushes. Every way we looked the view was full of beauty, and some tourists on a bridge in a ravine beyond, just stepping into a boat, gave human life and interest to the scene. Tutti was by this time rather tired, and lagged behind as we returned, but we had to wait for him to show us

a short cut to the landing-stage, as we did not want to miss the way. We had, however, some while to wait for the steamer, and had time to make friends with a dainty young lady of two, with great round brown eyes that lost no time in making themselves acquainted with all the details of the visitors' attire. There were also two little brothers of our guide with whom, as with his little sister, we were soon on good terms.

I must own that when I saw the placard, "*À vendre*," flapping in the wind I wished I had the two or three thousand spare pounds which would buy this lovely place. But, of course, with such a poetic name it ought to belong to some poet or singer. The wood should be valuable, but at present it is not looked after, and the meadowland is in the hands of a farmer, who, by way of rent, pays the taxes on the whole, which do not amount to much. The villa is surrounded by others, and indeed the whole canal is frequented by Petersburg families. It is close to Imatra, and all supplies can be had from Viborg on the Gulf of Finland, so it is likely to be valuable property.

We got into the boat, for which we signalled,

and went at once into the saloon, as the wind was too piercing to bear after our hot walk.

Our companions had thought at first that we had lost the boat, as they predicted we should, as they waited for us at a half-way station, but they soon joined us in our shelter.

We arrived at Viborg only just in time to get our things together and take our tickets for Imatra, and as our friends decided to go straight back to Petersburg, we confided to them a box we had intended to send there by luggage-train, and made a dash for the carriages already drawn up upon the platform. Here Miss de M. found a relative from Askabad also *en route* to Runolinna, and amid the excitement and interest of the meeting she trusted to her belief that there is only one platform and only one line in Finnish railways, and it was only just in time that we discovered ourselves to be in the wrong train.

Out we jumped, and jump you must, like an acrobat, from the high waggons of these trains. Our friends helped us with our bags and rolls, and we found ourselves on a narrow little platform at the back of the station, with just one minute to

spare. Among the things that took up the time was the intended forwarding of a telegram we had found at Runolinna which my friend meant to send on to the children's mother. But when opened it was so incomprehensible, that it took some minutes for the lady from Askabad to recognise her own message, announcing her arrival to her sister!

We parted company with our English friends, and all felt cold and tired, especially the traveller from the sunny south, who shivered in this month of August.

CHAPTER XIII.

SAIMA: ITS RAPIDS AND ITS LAKE.

ONCE more in the train, and noting that the railway line did not run through very pretty country, we fell asleep, and were presently interrupted by a ticket-examiner who, perceiving that I was a stranger, addressed me in Russian. He was merely anxious we should know that we might get tea at a half-way station, but we were too tired to move.

Looking out of the window, I every now and then got pretty glimpses of scenery. The wayside stations, made in the clearings of the forests, were very picturesque and reminded me of Himalayan travelling. One could imagine the white clouds piling up in the distance to be snow mountains, soft and far off. Only at St. Andrea did the country open out and the blue waters appear like smiles amid the gloomy pine-tree-covered country.

Andrea, we only realised at the moment, is the junction for Sordavala. But at present passenger-trains only run once a week, and this route would, though shorter, have been less interesting than the one we chose.

When we arrived at three o'clock, after a two hours' journey, at an unsophisticated-looking station at Imatra, we were quite worn out and faint from want of a good "square" meal. We had, however, luckily, been warned against the hotel, to which Russians are mostly driven, as being close above the rapids; for people arriving from the East as tourists, are generally unable to speak Swedish or Finnish, and are fleeced unmercifully. A small party of tourists in three days, and for very moderate living, were mulcted to the amount of £7 or £8.

It was at this railway-station that we made acquaintance with Antti Urikili, a quaint and voluble friend. He too knew how to charge, but on the whole he did very well for us. Yes, he knew the Finnish hotel, the way to the Falls, and to Vallin-koski, also to the steamer. The English Club, he said, was too far off for the four hours we had at

our disposal. He made his bargain, and as we were unwise enough to accept it without dispute, he further increased it by a mark, which however he fairly earned. He waited for us at the little inn, where we at last got some food. Though the tourist season was on the wane, there were still plenty of visitors, and a governor was expected every moment. We were asked to wait in a bedroom, which evidently belonged to the people of the hotel, but had, through press of circumstances, been placed at the disposal of some tourists for a night's lodging. Money and watches were trustfully left loose on the dressing-table. In a few minutes we were told that dinner was ready. Cabbage-soup, trout, wild duck, stewed prunes and delicious coffee refreshed us much, and the charge was only two marks fifty apiece—rather less than two and sixpence.

We did not stay long, and Antti was quite ready, so off we went, the cold wind having sunk, and the sunshine filling the air with balmy softness. Hardly five minutes' drive brought us to the bridge which has recently been built across the falls. Formerly, tourists were pulled across in a basket, but an

English traveller having once been suspended over the dizzy height for two hours, owing to an accidental disarrangement of the ropes, the authorities realised the danger of this mode of transit, and the bridge was built.

All that strikes you at the first moment is the volume of seething white that thunders along the rapids; you do not realise that it *is* a fall. There seems to be no visible descent, only an angry, boiling, tossing flood, too grand for description, and transfigured every now and then by the sunlight riding on the crest of its waves.

A little further off Antti drew up, and told us to go down to the water's edge in the grounds of the large hotel. He gave us five minutes, so we ran till we reached the winding-path, and soon found ourselves descending to the torrent's edge. Farther and farther down we went, till the water almost touched our feet, but at a safe distance, or we should have been swept away in a second and dashed to pieces mercilessly among the huge boulders. Now we could see that the waters did come down a steep incline, but not from any great height. There are many Scotch waterfalls which

are beautiful, as the waters dash from a rocky height clothed with ferns, and rich and varied vegetation. But here the vast body of water needs no such surroundings to enhance its wild beauty, though the rocky bed and channel are very fine. So great is the force of the waters, that the bed must be worn smooth and polished as marble. We were told that in its winter dress it was still more beautiful, and that it is an object of great attraction in the winter for the residents of Petersburg.

The hotel is fitted up for cold weather picnics, and the electric light throws a weird charm over the great water power which is utilised to produce this effect. The spray and foam are caught by the frost, and hang in icicles from the frozen rocks. Snow covers the earth and the pine-trees, and the torrent pours livid and death-like here between the pure white banks. The ice, too, when it breaks up on the higher lakes is tossed about in the waters, and gigantic blocks are thrown about as though but the playthings of the wilful waves.

Now, however, the calm sunlight illumined a

very different scene. Our driver next took us through a long and lonely road, amidst alternating meadow and forest land, to a gate, through which he bade us go, giving us a quarter of an hour, as the steamer would, so said the hotel folk, start at seven. Again we hastened through forest paths and climbed up to pavilions, only to find that the thick growth of the trees and underwood completely hid the waters; and though the trees were beautiful, we felt anxious to see what our ears heard, and to catch the expression of Nature where her voice was so unutterably strange and resonant.

Presently we caught sight of two figures standing on the farther shore above the torrent, and we found a circling path which ultimately led us round the bay, as it were, in which the wild tossing waters foamed, imprisoned between boulders, and surrounded by wood-clad shores. The noise was deafening, and the scene too beautiful for words, could they have been spoken. Out there on the narrow strip of firm ground we stood, the riot of the torrent rising in silvery spray around us. A little boat to the right was tossing perilously near to the rapids, but apparently amid safe waters.

One must not moralise when one writes of such beauty, but certainly the most reckless, careless person must feel awed in the presence of a force so utterly irresistible, so destructive to all that comes within its reach. Safe and unguarded, the onlooker may rest on the stone, and watch at ease on the very edge of its might; but once in the whirlpool of its wrath, death is instantaneous.

Other visitors were there, in the little pavilion above us, but when they moved we took a last view of the snow-white steeds, and then hastened back to Antti. The evening was lovely, the cold wind seemed a thing of the past. Our driver said we had plenty of time to catch the boat, which was true enough. So we enjoyed ourselves, and Antti sent his little "Pia" (lassie) on at a good rate.

There was a long drive before us, but his tongue ran as fast as his pony, and he entertained us with a lengthy story of how he was getting to be quite a rich peasant. The cart we drove in was, in popular lingo, a "'rilla," for, as I have said, Finns cannot pronounce the double consonants of European languages. Antti's 'rilla was an investment of his own. In fact he claimed to have made it

himself, and though hardly to be called "smart," as probably the wheels, springs, &c., were the relics of various antediluvian machines, it proved fairly comfortable. We could well give Antti the credit he expected for the success of his manufacture, and

ANTTI AND HIS CART.

praise his forethought. Tourists, he said, loved trillas, and he hoped to make money out of his venture. Doubtless he had already made some, though he did not press that fact upon us. With a further eye to business, he had arranged his house for letting, and made about 300 marks out

of it every summer, *i.e.*, about £15, a large sum for a peasant. We did not see the house, but the photograph we procured of our driver and his original cart (his beloved trilla had not yet been pictured on paper) gives a very good idea of a Finnish peasant of these parts.

The road led through a pine forest, from which the cattle were coming home to be milked, and the air was balmy and pleasant. Suddenly, an opening in the woods gave us our first view of the blue Saima lake, and leaving an hotel on our right, we dashed down a steep hill to the water's edge, while Antti, scanning the horizon and seeing no steamer, and not understanding the matter having been paid, drove up to the hotel to make inquiries.

Two little lads saw us waiting in the shed, and crept up to us with baskets of birch-bark full of raspberries, and we found that the boat was to start at six. They always brought berries, they said, to sell, about the time that tourists came to the boat. The lads, however, were destined to be disappointed. The boat had gone back to Willmanstrand to be mended, and there was no other to send in its place. So said Antti, as, picking up

our bundles, he put us again into the "'rilla," and drove us up to the hotel.

Our disappointment was allayed by the prospect of a good night's rest, and a lovely vision of blue waters all dancing in the sunset light, which we rejoiced in from our bedroom windows. The hotel was a delightful one, pitched just in the right place. The rooms were large and clean—spotlessly so; and a fresh aroma of pine-trees floated round. The dining-room was some little distance off, and after dinner I was so tired I had my tea brought up to my room. We soon fell fast asleep, full of many plans for the morrow.

There were telephones from the most distant places in this hotel, and the first thing we did the next day was to ring up our friends, but every one that morning seemed to have forestalled us. There was nobody to answer us at Andrea, the line to the English Fishing Club was blocked, and our friends at another place were away.

We intended to fill up the time till one—when the boat started "for sure"—with visiting and fishing, but about eleven a message came to the effect that there would be no boat that day.

We had hitherto taken things calmly, though we had missed the steamer we specially wanted to catch, but now we should miss the last chance of getting on to our far-distant point of Annikiemi for some days. This was disheartening, the more so as, on asking the distance to Willmanstrand by road, it seemed impossible to catch our steamer there. But after much consultation we decided to try for it. We interviewed our kind and all-promising host. His own horses were engaged by the two families living in the hotel, but he would get us horse, and carriage, and Jehu for the next stage, *immediately*. It would only take us three hours or so, he said, but knowing the uncertainty of stage supplies, we ordered our dinner at one, hoping to start at half-past. We had spent more than an hour in various negotiations with our host, and applications by telephone to Andrea. Our only other possibility of getting east was by an occasional train from that town. But our message received no answer.

We amused ourselves as best we could with reading and writing, and consulting the guide-books in the hotel ; but these latter were all ancient

as were also the newspapers. Finding that neither dinner nor vehicle appeared, I tried what a little despair would do, and repeated in doleful accents to mine host his own hopeful word, "genast, genast"—immediately. Meanwhile another party had arrived to catch the steamer, and finding none, caught at the idea of driving all the way to Willmanstrand. Now we were quite hopeless; two horses would certainly exhaust the resources of the next stage-house, and as the new-comers started ahead of us with the horses, or rather ponies from the last stage, there would be no relays for us. We saw them start, and turned mournfully to our dinner, which was now ready, and twenty minutes later a queer-looking creature rode into the yard, and our host brought the cheering news that a peasant would drive us in his, the host's, own trilla *all* the way to Willmanstrand, that he promised to be there by six, and the steamer did not start till nine, and that if we liked it, he would secure berths for us on board the *Don Juan.*

If he did this, he said, the vessel would be bound to wait for us. So, after all, though we missed through his dilatoriness the sight of the lovely spot

near the English Fishing Club, we had reason to be grateful to our host for his kindliness.

Apart from the inconvenience of the delay, nothing could have been more charming than a few days' stay at the lovely secluded spot. There were various notices in the guest-book to the effect that people had stayed there for as many weeks as they had intended to spend days, and always reference was made to the comfort and good food to be found. The neighbourhood abounds in salmon and trout, and in lovely scenery, and material for character-sketches.

The hotel-keeper had started the first hotel at Imatra before the days of the railway, and had failed, as so many pioneers do. But perhaps he was a little too much imbued with the Finnish spirit embodied in the proverbs "God did not create hurry," and "Time is always before one." That time is money is an idea altogether unintelligible to the unsophisticated Finn. But if a weary, overworked Briton wants beauty, rest, and perfect comfort combined with change, let him try this lovely spot, well-named Rauha, "the abode of peace," and stay there for a while. Five marks

(= 4*s.*) a day is the charge for board and lodging, not, of course, including wine.

Thanking our host for his civility, we got into the trilla. We had fortunately taken pillows with us, and this was a good precaution, for it takes off much of the discomfort arising from the shaking, if you have a good soft pillow for your back. But the pillow should not be too thick, as the seats are very narrow, and have little space for such luxury.

Presently a question made our driver turn his head, which was lost in the deep slouch of his hat. It was evident, from his long face and well-shaped nose, that he was not from the district, and he became quite chatty and communicative. His home was near Vasa, but he had wandered for twenty years, had worked hard meanwhile, and accumulated money. He had "taken," as he said, his wife from Orivesi. She was hard-working, but he had no money with her. Coming in his travels to Saima, which he said was just in Karelia—a fact we afterwards discovered to be incorrect—he found a little property ready to his hand, and he invested some of his savings, to the amount of £40, in what he said was rich and fertile soil. He had within

the year been offered half as much again for it, but he intended to wait until he could get double the original sum.

This led to a discussion about the people and the country. For the latter he could not say too much, and he only wished the hard-working folk round Vasa had this soil to cultivate. For these people he certainly had no admiration. They were lazy, idle, ignorant, who neither tilled their land properly, nor cooked good food. His pony, which had cost him £7, went along at a good rate, and was evidently taken care of, and we could well believe that his house, which he had found tumble-down, and in miserable condition, had been made comfortable and habitable by his thrifty labour.

We appreciated the difficulties our host had had to encounter in getting us a horse and driver, when we heard that our friend had been called from the field with his little nag to drive us. We were amused too by the sagacious answer we received when we asked "had the hotel at Rauha answered, and was the owner a rich man?"

"Never call a man rich till he is dead," was the dry reply, and indeed in every country, fortune is

liable to such cruel reverses that the wisdom of the saying is evident.

Just then he was urging his horse up a steep hill which he was taking at a gallop. The church of Joutsenu crowned the height, but as it was not ancient, and time was precious, we pressed on Some little way from the stage-house we looked back, and found that the two cart-loads of tourists, who started before us, were now following us. A word to our driver that we hoped his gallant steed would not be beaten in the race to Willmanstrand kept us ahead, and out of the dust which we could see eddying behind the carts, and we kept the lead all the way. Here and there were great snow ploughs lying ready, to keep the stage-road open in winter. The pillars and posts too, that marked the way, gave particulars as to the persons who had to keep each portion of the road in order. The scenery was much like that of the many forest drives we had had. Presently we came to a narrow little stream banked up on either side, with a charming pathway along it. This is where the Saima canal starts on its way to Viborg; it was an important relief work in former famine-time. It

looked a lovely walk, and we saw some people evidently enjoying the bright sunshine, as they strolled alongside the water.

Here again we saw a great many Russian soldiers and officers. There is a large garrison at Willmanstrand; the Czar too has a villa there, which is furnished entirely by the produce of Finnish manufacture. It is not open to the public, but it looks very pretty as it stands amid trees in the picturesque little town.

Being a little uncertain of our way to the steamer, our guide turned to a tall fine-looking man, whose white shirt, ornamented with rich red embroidery, marked him at once as a Russian, and we were not surprised that he could not answer. The road, however, was easy to find, and down our game little steed trotted to the waterside. Here a huge runaway Russian horse nearly demolished us, as it tore down the steep incline. Fortunately, the soldiers clinging on to it made it swerve, and pulled it up within a few yards of us. We were now underneath the famous fortress of Willmanstrand. Both Russian and Finnish troops are quartered here. The Finns have only one cavalry

regiment attached to their army, and no artillery. Their cavalry regiment was stationed here. There is no love lost between the soldiery of the two nations, and there are occasional encounters between them.

The boat we sought, *Don Juan*, was already getting up steam, when we arrived, and was crowded with passengers. But our driver and pony had done well, taking us over twenty miles in three hours, which, considering the weight of the clumsy trilla, loaded with our luggage and three human forms, we thought very good. It was lucky for us that we did catch the steamer, for it started at six instead of nine, and we had barely an hour for the visits my friend intended to make.

I shall never forget the thrilling view from one of the houses perched on the hillside, which we obtained during that hour. However much the same are the elements of beauty in this land of lake, and rock, and forest, the combinations are marvellously varied. Colours, sunshine, atmosphere, all have ever interchanging beauties.

Most hospitably were we entertained with wine

and jam, with tea and "breads," and with kindly talk, so that the time fled rapidly, and we had to call a drosky, and fly for the steamer, which was shrieking and yelling discordantly, and evidently only waiting for some important addition to its cargo. This we saw before us, in the shape of the "post," which was just ahead.

The droskies are not comfortable for light weights, because they fly round corners, and tear down hills at such a rate that it is impossible to keep your seat, unless you plant your feet firmly against the board in front. However, we arrived safely, found our baggage, and rescued it from the position of pillow to the many third-class passengers, who had found it comfortable, and looked into our tiny cupboard of a cabin.

Going on deck, we found ourselves surrounded by a very motley crew. A few officers, Finnish ones, were smoking, one or two richer men of the peasant class were talking together, and immediately round us were some half-dozen Finnish girls, whose chatter was too quick and colloquial for any but an expert to understand. They were truly Finnish in type, there being no bridge to

unite the intellectual foreheads with the turned-up tip that stands for a nose, just above a very ocean of a mouth. Nevertheless, photographs seemed to be the order of the day, and catching sight of one I was astonished to see how well one may look in a photograph minus a bridge to one's nose. The girls, as a rule, were simply dressed, with long plaits of hair down their backs ; all the finery they attempted was concentrated in their hats. Flowers large and varied enough to have outvied the utmost vagaries of a fashionable London bonnet of this season's extravagance were grouped together in the broad white brims which shaded the homely faces. We learnt afterwards that this was an outburst of civilisation, so keen was this particular class of girl to discard, for the summer at least, the national kerchief on the head.

We should have liked to stay on deck far into the night, for the sunset among the islands left lovely gleams of pink. But even now the heavy banks of clouds were whirling up with the rising wind, and foretold rain. So, prudence being the better course, we descended into our cabin. Over the miseries of that night we draw a kindly veil,

for in it we certainly spent the only really uncomfortable hours of our journey.

The night, however, was happily short, for by four o'clock we had to dress, and be ready to land at Nyslott, where there was much to be seen, and

NYSLOTT.

but little time to see it in. When I first went on deck, a lovely rainbow spanned the sky behind the tall red steeple of the Lutheran Church, and the ancient castle stood out on its little islet, gray and picturesque, against the stormy sky.

We first hurried up to the pavilion, or tower of Hungerborg, which, appropriately enough, is a

restaurant. The caretaker was asleep, but finally pushed the key through the door of the room, and we ran up the steps to the topmost chamber. The tender morning light brooded over the wide-spreading landscape, giving a fresh beauty to this wonderful lake winding away in the wide channels, amid islands and promontories. Blue as its waters always are, they seemed draped in a transparent silvery sheen, which only intensified the blue. But we could not wait long, and hurried down across the road to the castle bellstand. We pulled the bell several times violently, and at last an old man appeared through the castle passage, and put out a boat. He came across in it, and then rowed us over. We had but a few minutes to spend in this historic place, of which so many tales are told, but even they were better than none at all.

CHAPTER XIV.

GRAY DAYS.

A DAY that begins with a rainbow generally has its fate written on its brow, and we knew that we could not have good weather for Punkaharju. My friend went downstairs to make up for the bad night, and I tried to write home letters on deck, till I was frozen. The ladies' cabin was uninhabitable, for it was crowded with the girls who had amused us so much the night before, and who were now making their toilettes. We had expected to leave them all at Nyslott, for we thought they were school-teachers returning home from a trip before the beginning of the educational year on September 1st. But, on the contrary, their numbers were augmented by a fresh contingent who came on board at Nyslott. When we stopped to "wood," the whole company turned out to take

a sharp walk, and dispersed among the surrounding trees.

I, too, tramped out, to try and get warm, and when, just as we started again, my friend appeared, I suggested that we should go into the little cabin on the companion ladder. This already held a portly Finnish officer and his "lady," and though we were on camp-stools well out of their way, they began to talk in Swedish of the want of politeness of these English people, who always pushed themselves where they were not wanted, and, much to Miss de M.'s amusement, they continued with a long dissertation on the convenience of English coats and waistcoats, and blouses for ladies when travelling.

"If they do away with the necessity of my having to fasten all your hooks and eyes, my dear, I think they are admirable," said the gentleman But the lady did not regard the matter in that light, and so probably lost her chance of getting a new dress out of her husband. At Punkaharju the couple left us, as they were going to spend a few days entirely alone with each other, and freed from the danger of chance English society. . . .

Certainly, if the weather is lovely, and one has either solitude or pleasant company to enjoy it, nothing can be more delightful than to spend long hours and days in the quiet remoteness of this exquisite promontory.

Everything is kept in park-like order, for the site is Government property, but there are no signs of work-people about. The tongue of land runs for five versts right out into the lake. It is surrounded on both sides by shores as beautiful as its own fir- and birch-clad banks. Islands, smaller promontories, bays, wide reaches of water, narrow channels opening out again into broad lakes, or winding like silvery threads through the maze of distant foliage—such glimpses of beauty met us at every turn, and one could picture to oneself the varied charm and moods of such scenery in the many changing lights of a northern atmosphere. The day we saw it sunshine had ceased to struggle with the silver-gray light that lay cold and dead on the waters which, immediately round the promontory, in its pools and bays, were of a wonderfully deep green hue. The birches and pines were mirrored back in the water,

and the beauty of the silvery birch-stems was especially fairy-like, thus pictured in the calm lake's depth.

We had lately had luncheon *vis-à-vis* to the officer and his wife on board, and took a long walk amid all this beauty, to warm ourselves, but they had expressed the need of further sustenance, and it was only on our return, just as we neared the restaurant, that we saw our critics starting on a drive to the end of the promontory. We ran in for a minute, and drank some coffee, and then returned post-haste to the *Don Juan*, which was panting and puffing to be off.

This promontory is always considered one of the loveliest sights in Finland, and the restaurant, or hotel rather, is said to be comfortable. Of the two places, however, I should prefer the Rauha pension, where we spent the night by the Saima. That, of course, we saw at its best, and Punkaharju, perhaps, in its grayest, coldest light, but even so, the promontory certainly has charms. A touch of colour on one side of the lake showed us how lovely its autumn tints must be, for a patch of birch and bracken had been burnt for tillage, and

the rich brown hue gave additional light to the sombre colouring of the pines.

Once started again, we found that the wind had sunk or veered to a warmer quarter, and we sat, freed from our critics, in the little cabin. We saw these same good people at a convenient distance just as we came to the end of the promontory, whence they were watching us. At the same time we took on board a new passenger, who, with two little boys, had been rowed by her servant-girl across to the steamer from a charming villa half hidden among the trees. From the newcomer we learnt that the crowd of young women on board were elementary teachers who were being trained at the Sordavala Seminarium. The college was to open in a day or two, she said, a piece of information most welcome to us.

The lake scenery around us in the dull light did not prove very interesting, though we were suddenly reminded that it was Saturday evening by seeing a church boat rowing across the water. Whence it came we knew not, but the distance must have been great for it to start on the Saturday. They were making for the huge church of

Kerimäki, which, though many miles off, loomed on the horizon. It holds many thousands of people, but is altogether modern, only dating back fifty years or so. The church-goers are said to have a very pleasant time on Saturday evenings, as the village round this large place of worship is a *rendezvous* for a very extensive district. The "sabbath" in Finland begins on Saturday evening, so there is no work to be done, and every one enjoys himself. There are, however, but few villages visible from the lake, and a village or farm-house is the rarest object in the landscape.

Neither, until farther eastward, was there any cultivation. The islets were innumerable, and all much alike in form or colouring, though in one part we passed several absolutely desert islands, without herbage or tuft to cover the granite rock.

We were getting a little tired of the sameness, when, between two or three in the afternoon, we suddenly found the channel narrowing, the birch-trees fringing the water's edge and dipping their boughs into the waves. It was a delightful change, and we could fancy this a lovely spot in warm, sunny weather, to dream and fish. For here we

were told that trout and salmon abound. Indeed, later we saw the salmon brought up for sale to the captain. We should have bought some, but the journey to my friend's home was too long, as there were no conveniences for keeping the fish fresh.

The stillness and quiet of the last few hours made us relish all the more the amusing scene at the water's edge. Here, we were told, we were really in Karelia, and this animated group of voluble, chattering peasants were at this moment illustrating the chief characteristics of the race, love of bargaining and love of horseflesh and of driving, peculiarities which militate much against steady labour.

A cluster of the school-teachers stood in the midst of these broad, low-browed Karelians. The girls were accustomed to bargaining, for all of them had been through it two or three times in the past year, and knew just how much to give, and which carts to take. We arranged with one man to return for us in an hour's time, and went back to the boat, to make a good dinner. It was then that the captain told us that the peasants here will never work if they can on any pretext drive or

make money by their horses. They have here, as in the rest of Finland, three kinds of carts: a narrow country cart, like a low greengrocer's trap, without springs, which tourists should avoid; secondly, Åbo *cherras*, or carts which are never very comfortable, but are bearable with springs, but without springs they leave little of the tourist to tell his experience! There is also the *trilla;* and fourthly, the drosky, but of this there were no examples here.

As we waited for our conveyance in a drizzling rain, we amused ourselves by watching the girls, some of whom lingered. They had, as you can do in Finland, brought all their food on board with them, and were now adding to their various "breads" the raspberries which the country boys offered for sale. Fish, which was caught over the steamer side, was being prepared for dinner, and washed in the water by a woman who, as she scraped and skinned the fish, fed the pigs which grunted round.

We were a little tired of the prospect, and began to walk up a deep sandy road, when the carts returned to take us on. The one we had engaged

had apparently been changed for a springless *cherra*, so we took the opportunity of changing our minds also, but were not much the better for so doing. Luckily we knew there were only two kilometres before us, so we found our jolting and shaking somewhat amusing, and though the springs were so active that they tossed us like pancakes, we remained in the cart, and had no accident. But when we arrived at the end of our drive, I had a stitch in my side as though I had run breathlessly. It lasted a long while, but I had time to notice that we had really seen the last of the blue and fascinating Saima.

The low, thinned grove of birches ended here in a silver strand, and in water so pure and fresh that every pebble could be seen under the waves on the white sand. The groups of merry girls who had received further recruits, were scattered in picnic parties among the birch groves.

The Karelian drivers had drawn up their carts close behind, and were eating their own refreshments, and the ponies were resting themselves after their short but rapid journeys. A bathing machine was run out some way beyond the little

wooden pier, but who it was that had thus forestalled European tourists in this way, we could not find out. The little pier was laden with luggage of every description, and we carried ours as near to the end as we could, and then sat down, and watched for the steamer, which was soon in sight.

The picnic parties washed their hands in the limpid waters, and made a rush for their packages. The drivers simply fought their way on board the boat to secure return fares. I think there was only one, and he must have been torn to pieces. It seemed impossible to pack the pier load into the toy steamer, but we retired into the tiny saloon, and soon the noise overhead of stacking wood and luggage ceased, the passengers quieted down, and we too fell fast asleep, and only woke when once again we stopped for fuel in a charming bay, where a group of villagers had come down to see who was on board.

The lake we were now on, Pyhäjärvi, seemed lovely, but we could not keep our eyes open. Stopping at Annikiemi, we had again to fight our way through a crowd, and reached the stage-house. Here we reviewed matters, and seeing that

the teachers were all in a desperate hurry to be off, and had seized on the various available carts, we thought a night's rest would be good. We did not want much to eat, and soon went to sleep—at least I did, but my friend was not so lucky.

There was nothing to be had here in the way of food, and next day there was no course practicable, Sunday though it was, but to press on to our next stage. So after waiting quietly till the church-goers were well started, we went on our way (as usual with an Antti for coachman, as Antti seems to be the name of names here) in a very fairly comfortable Åbo *cherra.* Our steed was none of the most beautiful, but on my remarking to our charioteer that his pony was a good goer, he remarked, in his dry way, that there might be a better.

Soon after we left the rest-house, a woman stopped us, wearing her hair in a plait down her back. Apparently she had not completed her morning toilet when Antti had hurried her to get his food ready, for the plait is not generally worn by married women.

She handed up the provender in a Kont or

basket made of plaited birchwood, and very good Antti found the food, when he said later on: "I must see what my wife has given me." It was a variety of cakes made with rye, none of which looked very inviting to us. He also filled up the back part of the cart with hay for the pony. Antti sat on a three-legged stool at our feet. Often, in an Åbo *cherra*, the coachman will sit on the edge of the cart, or will stand up. His proper place is behind, but this necessitates good driving, as the reins are held on one side, and not between the persons in front.

The first part of our drive was past rough slopes on which the trees and bushes had been burned down, and the rye or other grain planted in the ashes. For some reason or other this mode of sowing is called Sved, but it has nothing to do with the Swedes, as it was in use centuries before the time when Swedes ruled in the land. Any one who has read the 'Kalevala' will recognise at once the custom detailed there in the first canto. It is the ordinary method of cultivation throughout Finland, except in districts where civilisation has advanced, and where the procedure is looked upon

as barbarous. The soil thus obtained is so rich that the peasants reap harvests off it for three years. They then destroy a new piece of woodland allowing their former bit of ground again to grow bushes or trees, and thus they have a rotation of ground as well as of crop. Much land is doubtless required for the purpose, but land is not scarce in Finland. Our own driver confessed to this method of sowing, and showed us in the course of the drive fields which he possessed some twenty versts from his own village.

The country spread out, as we went along, into moorland, which Antti said was full of game, and farther on still, where a burnt and calcined forest stood gaunt and gray on either hand, we asked if the game included bear.

"Oh, yes," said he, "the place here is full of bears. It is quite common to see them jogging on the road in front of one, but at the sound of wheels, or at the voice or sight of man, they quickly shuffle off. They are very troublesome with cattle, which they will kill, and carry off at once, if they find them unguarded. But a boy is enough to keep any number of cattle safe. For the most part he

carries a birch-pipe, on which he plays to amuse himself."

Probably, too, the music—or howling, as it may chance to be—frightens Mr. Bruin. We found later on that this country is well known to be infested with bears, but as they seem to be quite harmless to man, no trouble has been taken to exterminate them, and they appear to be completely at their ease. Farther east again, they will only snuff at a man sleeping out at night, but never touch him.

We now passed through a valley surrounded by woody heights, and on the nearer elevations were tiny houses, farms, and solitary huts. It seems that it is a characteristic of this part of the country always to build on elevations. No doubt, in snow-time, the houses built in hollows might be buried in drifts. Very poor and miserable the buildings were. The road next took us up a rising ground of forest-land which was so delightful that we got out and walked, gathering flowers as we went. The grass of Parnassus was plentiful, and a plant which our driver called "butterhay" charmed us much. The upper leaves of the dead nettle-like

plant were of a rich purple tint, and clustering below them was a bright yellow flower. It faded almost as soon as gathered, but it was so beautiful that we dug out some roots, to try and transplant them.

All the way our driver had been very chatty. He told us how he had chosen his wife. He said: "There was some talk of her in the village. My aunt's nephew spoke to me of her, but I never saw her till the day before we were engaged. When I heard of her I went to the Puhumies (man of speech) who always arranges these things. I gave him five marks for her. She liked what she heard of me, and she gave him, as she was bound, a white shirt. Then I thought I would see her, so we arranged to meet at church at Uunikiemi, and we went there, and it was all right."

"We get on together," was all the praise he would vouchsafe when we inquired further.

We asked about Runo singers, and he replied that we had left one behind us in his village who could sing all the songs that ever were, but it would have been no good to ask him to sing that day, for he could not have sung "while the books were

BURNING THE LAND FOR CULTIVATION.

open," *i.e.*, in church-time. The clergy and lawyers and doctors said these songs were all folly and foolishness, and they ought to know. The clergyman of Uunikiemi was a clever man, and helped everyone in trouble, and always gave good advice. "And how should he not be clever when he was chosen to sit in the 'Church House' of the Parliament?" There are, as I have said, four estates—nobles, clergy, burghers, and peasants—in the Parliament, and to this he referred.

Once Antti had been in trouble about a piece of ground, but he very wisely went straight to the Governor, who made matters clear.

There are many tenures in Finland, some peculiar to the country, dating from feudal times, others instituted by the Russians. Catherine II. gave her favourite nobles many lands, and under these nobles the peasants also held lands on special terms. When the lands of the nobles passed out of their possession, in many different ways, these various "rights" became very complicated, and difficult to settle. Antti did not give us the particulars of his own trouble, but proceeded to ask us questions in return for all the information he had imparted.

He was much struck by the fact that Miss de M.'s father had two hundred or three hundred cows. "Is your father then no shop-keeper?" he asked, and when the reply was, "No, he had been a governor, and was an admiral," the conception of his greatness seemed quite simple beside the idea of a shop-keeper. That word evidently summed up in his mind all the ideas of pomp and magnificence possible.

A shower of rain came down heavily while we lunched at a way-side stage and followed us a little on our journey, but not for long. "Here," said Antti, "there are many highwaymen, and people are sometimes murdered!" It was not quite pleasant hearing, as we had only *pukkos* (knives) with us, and we saw in every wild-looking man a possible murderer. But the road was now full of people returning from church, and it was as yet quite early in the afternoon, so our fears were dispelled, though he pointed to the lake, and told a dismal story of a bridal party stopped and plundered as they returned one dark winter's night across the ice. The bridegroom was killed, but then he was drunk, and had boasted of the treasure he carried.

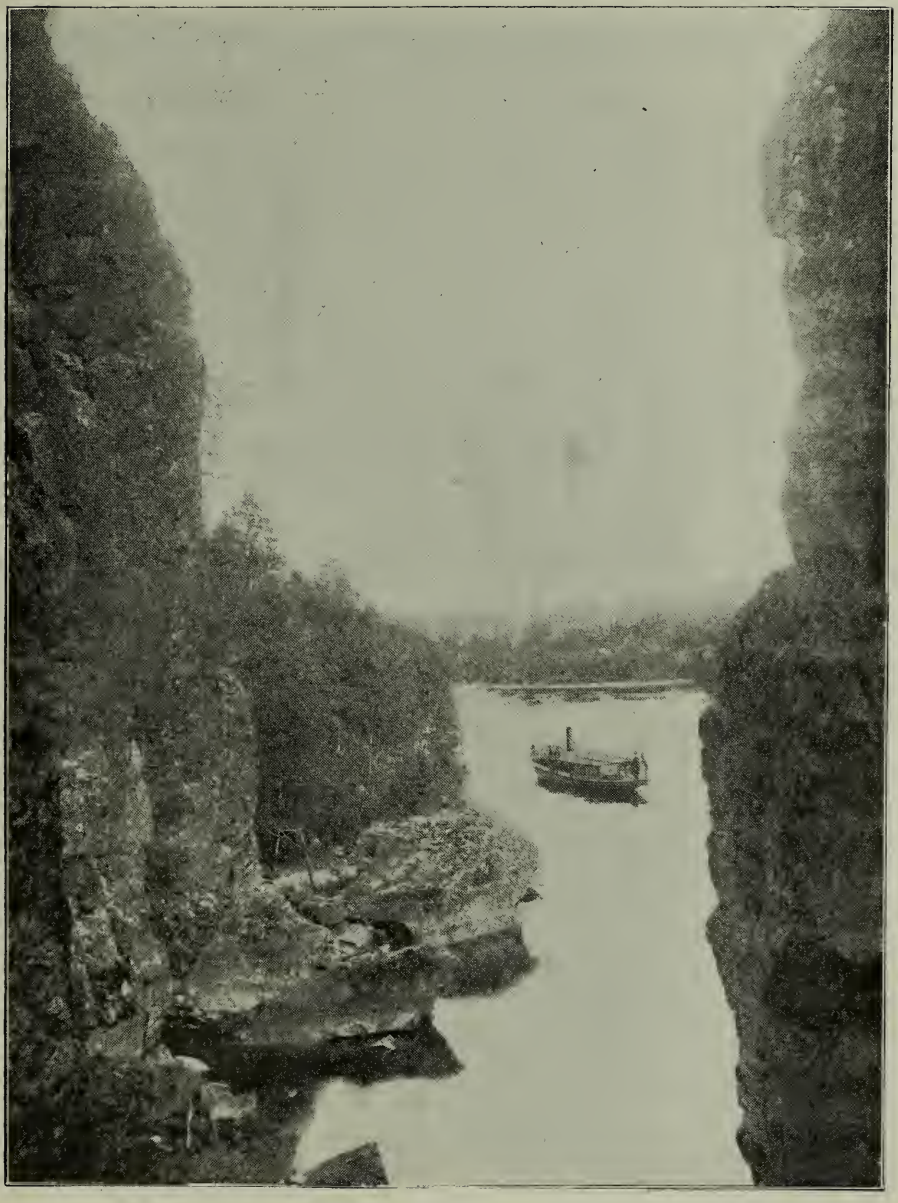
Close by was a mill, and a splashing little rapid which fed this lake. Good salmon is said to be found in the stream. Every now and again we saw a small lake, and to the right, beyond one of these, I noted the first signs of the Sordavala and Andrea Railway. At that time it was chiefly used to convey sand; but already the drivers on the stage-road, and the captains of the steamers, and the hotel-keepers, saw that it must eventually turn the traffic another way. Sordavala is the great centre of commerce between east and west Finland, and for the whole of northern Finland with Russia.

The town itself stands on a plain surrounded by hills, and though unimportant in appearance, is evidently flourishing and well-to-do. It is well-situated at the head of the great Lake Ladoga, and enjoys a commanding position, both for commerce and for beauty. The Tourist Club have opened up and laid out a charming park, where we spent some hours the day after our arrival. This most lovely spot, called Vakkosalmi, overlooks the surrounding country. In the foreground lies the old town, in which we had taken up our abode, with its Greek church and the old Lutheran edifice

standing out in vivid contrast ; the latter much like one of our own churches, tall and red, while the Greek church is built in the usual dome and cupola style, and painted in white and green. Across the bridge was the Seminarium, which we visited, and farther again, the buildings springing up round the railway, where as many women as men were busy at the works.

As a bright mirror, reflecting trees and sky, lay the Ladoga, with its arms stretching out in bays or "laktis." The ground at our feet was in itself a lovely sight, with the shining foliage of the cranberries, the bright blue of the gentians, and the soft everlastings nestling in the moss between the granite boulders.

The *Stadt huset*, or town hall, is considered the finest building in Sordavala, but though very pretty, its dimensions would scarcely exceed those of a good-sized country inn in England. Round it there is a lovely turf-laid garden, with shady trees and seats. Inside this little building, however, there are great treasures, for it contains a small but most valuable museum of objects of interest, collected in and round the town.



A BAY OF LADOGA.

I could not judge of the flint instruments found here, as I know nothing about them, but they all seemed in a good state of preservation. One thing I noticed on the drive to Sordavala, and that was, the peculiar form of the stones which had been used as milestones here. These gave me the impression that somewhere in the neighbourhood there had existed sacred circles, like those in the Isle of Man. The driver, to my inquiry, had answered that these stones were sometimes found together in large numbers, but they were also often isolated. I do not even know if such circles are likely to have existed, but it seemed strange that no runic circles or stones should have been found in West Finland.

What did delight me was the large collection of coins, found in the immediate neighbourhood. Many of these were Anglo-Saxon, or Hebrew, and some of course were from Russia and other neighbouring lands. A large number were Greek, and apparently Scythian in origin. I was allowed to take sealing-wax impressions of these later, but I fear they were hardly sharp enough for decipherment. A large number of "kantole," or musical

instruments (stringed), were also interesting, as on these the ancient Finns played the accompaniment to their songs. There was also a case of ornaments, and among them such beads as the maid of the Kalevala might well have torn off her neck, in her despair at having to listen to the wooing of the ancient bard. Besides various pieces of ancient weaving, bridal vests, etc., there were some specimens of hand-towels, which were richly ornamented with red patterns. I asked the caretaker if we could still procure these, and he said his niece wove some of the same patterns, and we eventually obtained some very good specimens. But so wedded was the girl to the form and size of her work, that she would not make a wider piece for an apron, except at an exorbitant price. There was no technical reason for this, but that perhaps, for the moment, her loom was only threaded with a narrow width of warp.

We were delighted with the museum, but there was little to illustrate the wealth which it is known existed in the days of the Kalevala, when gold and silver instruments and ornaments of various kinds were in vogue. The only spinning-wheel was small

and broken. But one article of great interest to me was the long shepherd's calendar of wood, with hieroglyphic representations on it.

Among the smaller institutions of the place we also visited the weaving-school. I was delighted with the work I saw there. At that time the scholars had not re-assembled after the holidays, but there were specimens of first-rate work. The absolute weaving was in itself good, putting aside the question of colour, in which also many of the articles I saw were specially rich, though, as far as I have seen, this is generally the weak point in Finnish art. We left an order for some goods, and came home in pouring rain.

The same day we visited the Seminarium, and indeed it was just one of those deluges that would have made us low-spirited and miserable, had we sat at home and listened to the torrents that fell. But our day was well employed, and so gloomy did the prospect of a journey to Walamo on the next day look, that we decided to catch a later boat, and remain another day at the Societetshuset, which had so far lodged us.

There is not much variety of food to be found at

this time of year in Sordavala. Neither fish, nor game, nor berries are to be had, but you are pretty sure to get good potatoes, *chöt bulla*, or meat balls, and "veal côtelettes," wherever you go in Finland. The tourist should also ask for English or French bread, as the rye bread, sweet or sour, is only palatable after long use.

CHAPTER XV.

NEAR LADOGA.

WE were nearing our goal. But we were in no hurry, and preferred lingering on where so much was to be seen to trusting ourselves on the merciless waves of Ladoga. I have found since that many English people in Finland have been to Sordavala, but they have never heard of the museum, nor of the weaving-school, nor seen the Seminarium, nor taken the lovely drive I will now describe. Of course in itself there is little to attract the traveller to the hotel, or "Societetshuseb," of Sordavala. We found neither food nor lodging superlatively good, but to us it seemed quite palatial after some of our experiences, and certainly the views round Sordavala made us consider that it must be regarded as one of the loveliest regions of Finland.

We had seen Ruovesi in its smiling, peaceful beauty; Helvitinjärvi and Taurisevajärvi in wild, mysterious moments, when the tempest-clouds above were not darker than the fathomless gloom of the unrippled waters, and also later, when rain, sweeping in silver mists, added light to the deep, dungeon-like gloom of the black ravine. Virdois had lain in tender evening light before us, and Orivesi smiled back the sunset colours in its matchless purity. The Saima Canal had been bluer than the sky above, and as we had sat at Runolinna, the Castle of Song, we had seen the winding line of this exquisite water glittering and coiling at our feet. My friend, too, had seen the far-off hilly land round Kuopio and Kajana.

But never before had either of us dreamt of anything more lovely than this country of Ladoga, where the hills cradle the many bays and islets of the mighty lake. Lonely and isolated the fertile region may be, though alas! year by year, the railway advances, and the shrill whistle of the steamer invades still further the stillness of the inland waters. Yet winding for miles on a level with the lake runs the narrow high road which

leads to the eastern frontier, where Finland passes into Russia.

Here, from the rounded mountain-tops, may be seen, reaching into the far distance, these arms of the mighty waters, stretching north and west, each bearing names which aptly describe their beauty. Here lies the "Bay of Many Colours," where the granite hills around rise blue, and gray, and soft warm rose. Now they are clad in the rich green of the pine, and the shimmer of the full-leaved birch, with the gleam of silver stems between them. But already the birches have caught the touch of autumn, and are flinging their golden tokens down, or shining richly among the green. The mountain ash has also turned red with the early frosts, and the ground is here purple with heather, there scarlet with the bilberry's latest foliage. What will the scene be like when all these tints spread from hill to hill, and the bracken ripens into richer hues, and the early sunsets light the slopes with the full blaze of their beauty? No wonder the poetic peasants have given it the name which suits it so well, Kirjavalakti, "Bay of Many Colours."

Then, farther on, lies the "Bay of Peace," Rauhalakti, where not a sound breaks the silence, except when Nature herself wakes into song, and finds voice in the ripples of the lake, the sighing of trees, the songs of the birds, and the thousand lesser tones which join in the harmony of gladness.

Ristijärvi we did not see, as we had already climbed far enough, and filled our eyes and minds with beauties untold. But it lies crosswise (whence its name), still farther north.

We had seen, like a cloud on the horizon, Walamo, the island to which we were bound, and already the cry of the seagull in perpetual reiteration warned us of the fate which might befall us upon our projected journey to this island monastery, and conjured up dreams of gathering clouds and drenching rain, which might defeat our desire. We had not intended, though, to spend our time thus sightseeing. The beauty of the day and scenery had kept us entranced, and certainly for health and strength this upland air, sunshine, and constant change of interest, are marvellously refreshing and life-giving.

We were anxious to see something of the people,

to hear their runos, and to find specimens of their handiwork. We had brought a little food with us, and we asked, in the log-hut which serves as stage-house, for milk, potatoes, and eggs. We looked at our quarters, and finally chose a bare room recently built, which had at all events the recommendation of solitude. Not that we feared our human kind, but there are other inhabitants in these regions, who, if once they make your acquaintance, prefer your company to your absence. We were certainly unsociable in this respect, and liked the as yet untenanted room. A large brick stove, as usual, filled the greater part of the chamber ; there was a large chimney corner, and in it the head of the family generally loves to sleep. A bench round two sides of the room, with the seat of honour where the two ends meet in the angle of the walls, was all the furniture. But a clean table was brought, and two teapots as usual, one on the top of the other, the lower one holding the hot water, which serves to replenish, and also to keep hot the upper one.

"Had we any 'tea-hay'?" Yes, we had, and we were soon imbibing some delicious tea, cream

that was of clotted thickness, good butter, white bread, and other simple articles of food.

While this was being got ready, we strayed into the Pirthi, or dwelling-room, where a tiny hammock suspended from the rafters held the youngest member of the family, a lovely, two-year-old child. Her fair, clear skin, and sun-bleached hair shone white against the yellow tints of the canvas or sacking among which she lay. Her legs and arms were uncovered, and had an artist strayed that way, the limbs, firm and round, and curved in full and perfect beauty, would have caught his delighted eye. Close by the door hung, suspended from a beam, a double-mouthed crock, of which we presently saw the use; for, with a slight touch, forth flowed the water in oriental fashion, over our hands, as we washed them.

Presently, the Isanta, or master, came in from the field, and after an elaborate toilet and change of linen, sat down to potatoes, milk, and rye-biscuit, with the rest of his family. Our driver was present too, and the boy, "Antti"—of course. Is there any house in Karelia without its "Antti"?

The remainder of the group was formed by four women, the Emanta and two daughters, and the mother-in-law of Anna Maria's and Antti's mother. The latter was in the fields, and the two grandmothers looked as if there had just been a difference of opinion, when we first came in. However, Anna Maria possessed herself of a sixpenny silk handkerchief, which I had bought at a London sale for some such purpose, but which I had tied round my neck that day to keep off the sun. Her joyous crowing woke the family to life and interest, and Anna Maria was not the least delighted member of the family, when she discovered thus early in life that she possessed what all Finnish women so greatly prize—a red silk kerchief for head-gear. It was finally hung up on the rafters, which, as usual, were treated as wardrobes, bread stores, and general receptacles for fishing, gardening, and other implements. As for the rye-bread loaves threaded along the rafters by the holes in their centre, no ordinary Englishman could get his teeth through them, but the Finlanders love them. The greatest trial of the hospital patient's life is that *white* bread is part of the diet. For all the many kinds of sour

bread after which his soul longs are strictly forbidden during illness. Of the more refined forms of this food, English people soon grow accustomed to the thinner sort of rye biscuit; and after a couple of weeks' travelling and roughing it, the soft, though very sour, bread becomes palateable.

Our friends in the stage-house ate and relished their simple meal while they chatted to us.

"Of course it is impossible here to find any one to sing runos," observed Miss de M., a remark which roused the indignation of Anna Maria's younger aunt. But if we had asked a plain question: "Can you sing runos here?" the answer would have been vague and equivocal.

"Certainly we sing them," was the reply now, in a tone of vehement but friendly indignation.

"Ah, that is well. We had been going on to the next village to hear the great singer, Borisso."

"He is dead," said our friends, "but may be his son has the songs."

The songs, however, which Borisso sang, they intimated, with great contempt in their voices,

were all in print. "Yes, they had songs," and the old man added that truly he could sing, and sing on all the night through, so many were his songs, an answer that Waino himself might have given. And the prevailing idea is that such is the truth. When once the runo-singers begin to sing, the frenzy seizes them, and they sit face to face on benches, holding each other's hands. "Brother, do you know this song?" and "Brother, have you another?" replies his friend, and so the night passes.

But when we asked for a song, the man's face grew rapt in expression, and he slowly shook his head, and said that he could not sing in cold blood; he must be inspired, an answer which, it is said, is the sober truth. Moreover, our friend was already late, and pressed for time, a condition of things which no true Finn can endure; it is worse than pain, and almost as bad as illness. Our host, therefore, rose to leave, and we asked for our reckoning, but we were told that we had already given more than we had received. However, we presented them with a mark, and hurried on, to find the son of Borisso, who lived in the village of

the "Bay of Peace." Along the waters lay the shallows, like long silver fingers. These foretell coming rain—"rain-tracks," the natives call them, for when they are visible in path-like stretches on the water, rain follows in their wake.

Our coachman was quite alive to the beauties of his native place. He had been a sailor, but had long retired on his savings, and was a rich man, with fifteen cows and three servants. To him we confided our desires, not only to hear runos, but also to obtain some of the fine drawn threadwork wherewith Karelian peasants adorn their hand towels. He forthwith pulled up his weary steed at a cluster of log huts, which he proclaimed as the abode of the late Borisso, and where also we might find the work we wanted.

Along a narrow footpath, over a round log bridge which spanned the village brook, up the steep bank, we came to the house pointed out to us. Each door is generally guarded by a dog, whose watchful care protects his master's property, and his loud bark soon brings his owners from the neighbouring fields. "Musti, Musti," to a black dog, or "Ransi, Ransi," to a red-brown one gene-

rally quiets them, as these are almost invariably the names used.

The mistress of the house was at home, and we instantly saw, by the *Ikon* in the angle of the wall, that here we were among Greek Christians. The style of the house was not inviting. A boy lay lounging, half asleep, upon the edge of the wooden bed, and another equally drowsy lad kept his seat while we stood talking. "No," the Emanta replied, "here at least they knew no runos, nor did the son of Borisso. Neither had they drawn work, or any kind of needlework or weaving. Perhaps yonder we could get what we wanted."

So farther up the hill we went, amid pigs which grunted at every corner, and found another Greek house. Here, at once, the linen we wanted was produced, and I secured a handsome Russian eagle, which was a very good sample of work. The artistic genius of the nation makes itself seen at every turn, for poor and miserable as their homes are, they have none of the sordid squalor of an unfavourable English home, and every window is full of myrtle, caledium, dracænas, geraniums, etc. The hand-work, however, which we wanted, is

only done across the Russian border, in the still more remote regions of Karelia, and even the weaving was here very coarse.

But of runos they knew nothing. So once more we descended to our cart, and found a group of peasants, men and women, in conversation with our coachman. They knew what we wanted, "but," said a self-complacent woman, "we no longer worship the old 'Aderman' (*i.e.* Adam); our pastors and the magistrates tell us it is wrong and sinful. All the old singers, too, died in the great cold last year." A picturesque old man, with a leather waistcoat, and long white beard, who, though not quite blind, was led by a dog, now joined the group. He could sing, but he would sing only "God's words." Then, as some of the men, unaware of Miss de M.'s knowledge of the language, became abusive. we decided we would move on, and give up our great quest, regretting that we had not turned back the day before, to the village where we had unwillingly left the singer, "who knew all the songs that ever were."

My interest in these runos had been quickened by hearing an anecdote a young topographical engineer

related. While wandering on official business still farther east than we were now, one of his servants cut his leg very badly. Having some knowledge of how to treat such matters, the engineer took the case in hand. Much to his annoyance, he discovered, soon after he had bound up the wound, that the bandage had been undone, and the wound exposed, and there sat an old sorceress, repeating a long charm over the injury. The ending of the charm invoked "the wall of the blood to rise." I remembered well the German translation of the runo, which, when the engineer read it, he said was a faithful rendering of the song, and we longed to hear the Kalevala songs of magic thus actually sung. The English or American translation, if I recollect aright, only invites the "crimson flood to stay," and thus loses the ancient expression. This charm is a very common one, even in the far west of Central Finland, but no one seems there to know exactly what words the blood-stayers use.

Somewhat weary with the long drive of between twenty-five and thirty miles, we reached our primitive hotel, and watched the gray clouds veil what had been a perfectly clear and glorious sky.

And so in contented fatigue ended our pleasant day.

One lovely view of Ladoga, close to a bright Finnish country house, where we were hospitably entertained, gives an idea of some of the scenery in its neighbourhood. (See p. 201.)

CHAPTER XVI.

WALAMO, DAUGHTER OF THE SEA.

PERHAPS philologists may quarrel with this translation of the name of one of the fairest spots on earth, but it exactly describes the position and surroundings of the group of islands, which are Finnish by right and by resemblance, but Russian in faith and custom.

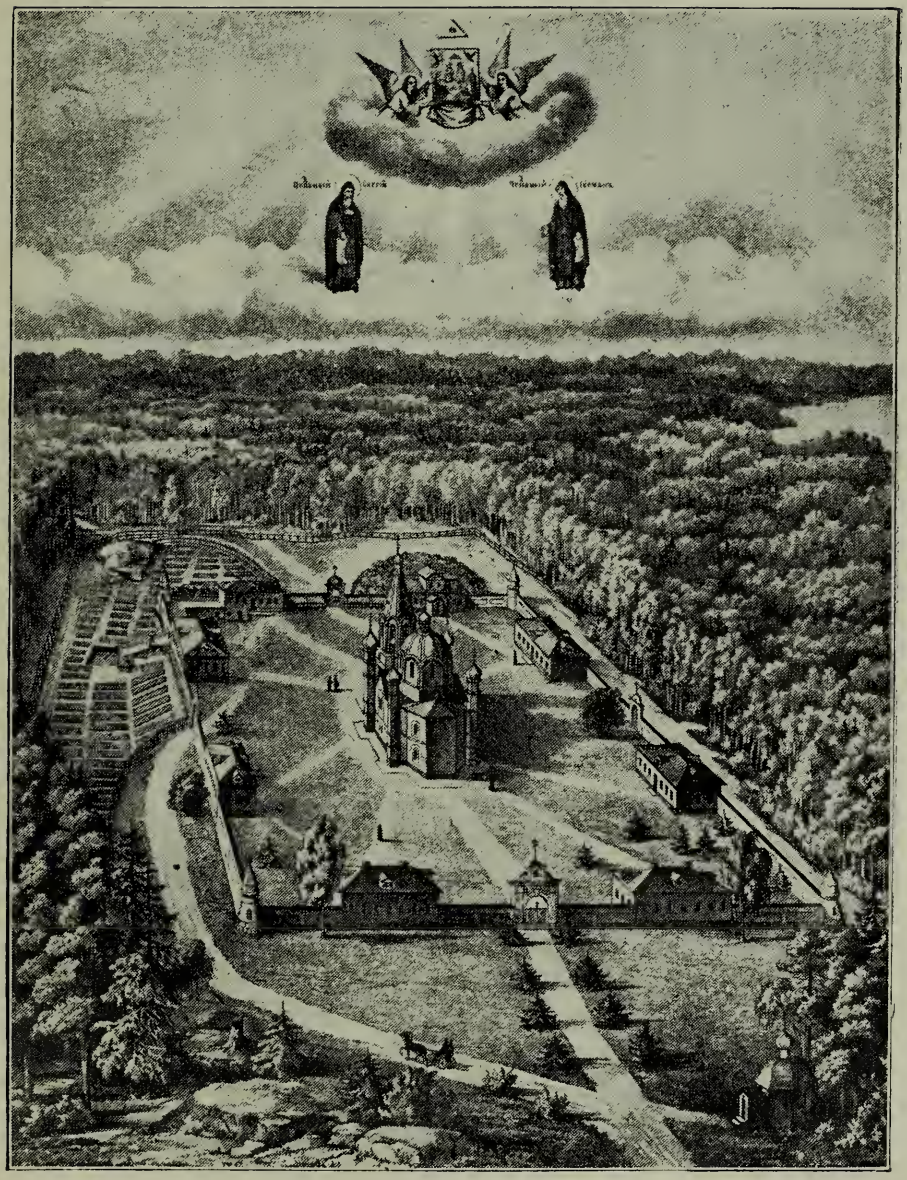
A cold, dreary mist parted us from our kind friends at Sordavala as we went on board the steamer the next day, but would not lift to clear the channel for our journey till quite late in the morning, and then, after giving us peeps of wooded islands and fairy bays, swept down again in chilling rain as soon as we reached the open lake which, ocean-like, has no visible bounds.

We consoled ourselves as best we might, with a good luncheon, when, quite unexpectedly, the sun

appeared, and we found every one was rushing on deck; and as we joined the stampede we saw, peering among the mass of rich foliage, blue domes, and golden minarets, bright glimpses of red walls, and white stone work—a scene half oriental in its mosque-like architecture, half tropical in the luxuriant wealth of vegetation.

The captain, like all sea-going Finns, knew something of English, and was very kind. But in the hurry of landing, and of introduction to a long-haired "father," we forgot the most necessary of articles, our provision basket. The interest of the scene quite engrossed our minds, and we were enchanted to drive up the steep ascent from the landing-place to the guest-house of the famous monastery we were about to visit, with a gray-clad lay-brother for our charioteer.

At the door a brother who recalled the ancient tales of holy friars, broad and jovial, and overcome with heat and good-nature, received us, and led us up to the head of the house. The kindly eyes of this father, who was evidently a man of importance, made us feel at once at home. He gave us into the keeping of a lay-brother, Alexander, who would



ANCIENT VIEW OF GREEK MONASTERY.

wait upon us, and he also recommended us to the more immediate guidance of a very beautiful young man, evidently superior by birth to many of the ecclesiastics with whom he had cast in his lot. We were told that shortly we might join the boat-ful of pilgrims on one of their pilgrimages. We saw crowds of these pilgrims of every class and Eastern nationality. A Russian officer of high rank was among the number, but many of them were poor, miserable objects, who obtain a livelihood by wandering thus from one holy spot to another, getting three days' lodging gratis here and there on their way, and begging for alms, a petition which it is of the very essence of the Greek faith to grant. Almsgiving, whether pauperising or not, is a practical article of the Greek religion, and is carried out to the letter.

We had time to wander round the grounds, and found our way to the cemetery. Here lies a Scandinavian king who, being shipwrecked on Ladoga, was saved by the monks of Walamo. When he regained consciousness, so runs the story, he glorified God for His great mercy in delivering him from the sea, then and there renounced the

world, his kingdom, and his crown, and was received into the Greek Church, dying almost in the moment of his recovery. But his conversion, for such it was considered, enabled the monks to have a royal tomb within their sacred acre. Another tomb we did not expect to see was that of a woman. Women are altogether unlikely to disturb such sacred shades, yet here reposed a rich benefactress of the monastery, and here, with meaning in his voice, discoursed, as he sat by the rich lady's grave, a most unpleasant-looking beggar, on the evil of women.

A little lad who belonged to the charity school, just then having a holiday, sat and mused, as the blind man related how thankful he was that he could no longer see—what a blessing was blindness, since it hid women from his eyes, and prevented him from being perplexed by the question: "Is she beautiful or no?"

Then we looked over the wall, and saw how the water was raised, and next went to see if our room was ready. The fat and worthy porter who had met us at the house-door, was wiping his honest brow, as we reached our apartment, having de-

posited what an English porter would have thought but a light load, consisting of two bundles, and two hand-bags. Alexander said we should have a samovar and tea when we returned from our pilgrimage, for which it was time to start. Down we went to the boat-house, with the beautiful young man. He was very young, and had an extremely severe manner, in ordering and arranging, which suggested that he might have been an officer in a Russian regiment. Our boat was a large one, and the pilgrims simply swarmed in. The young man chose the best and strongest of them to assist the ordinary crew, a move which was not welcome, and excited many comments, but he enforced his decisions, and at last, having told off another crew for a second boat, he gave the order to start, and came back to the rudder. His return dislodged two little lads who had intended to steer, and who curled themselves up in the bows, one, a bright little fellow, being full of merry tales. I could not account for the beautiful young man's lurking smile while he evidently rebuked the boy's prattle, and he, heedless of the rebuke, repeated: "It is true—it is true," much to Miss de M.'s amusement,

who, as she knew, besides the ordinary European languages, Swedish, Finnish, and Russian, was an ideal guide through these lands of many tongues. The story was, as usual, about a girl, who was clearly an upholder of women's rights, and chose her own time for coming and going, despite monastic regulations.

"Row with good-fellowship," was the instruction from the helm when the oars did not go together, an instruction which had to be repeated almost every moment till we reached the island where stood the chapel to which we were bound.

My friend and I watched the crowds with interest. Some pilgrims were scribbling hastily at the last moment the names of those for whom they desired to pray. The proper tariff for such prayers was printed, and hung up in the hall of the guest-house. Many had their prayers ready written, and our beautiful guide received a sheaf of these papers every time he appeared. Presently we went inside the chapel, and bought photographs and remembrances, listened to the hurried reading of these prayers, and to the music, in which our merry urchin of the boat was one of the chief singers.

Some of the music was fine, but much went hopelessly wrong. If the singers once lost the pitch they seemed unable to recover themselves.

Just as a purple-robed ecclesiastic was going to begin his office, a gentle-faced deaconess greeted me with humble reverence and respectful familiarity. Was I not Madam * * * * , the head of the deaconesses in Petersburg, and therefore, so far as I could make out, sister of Madame Blavatsky? I was obliged to repudiate the honour, much to her grief. Being unable to speak Russian, too, I could not play such a part.

Suddenly, it flashed across my friend that we had not paid for our luncheon on board the steamer, and at the same time it occurred to me that our food, and, what seemed to me much worse, all our wonderful purchases, were on board still, going to Petersburg. We left the chapel to communicate our horrors to each other, and thus just escaped the pain of having to choose between seeming to insult and seeming to worship the cross, which, moreover, so many diseased and sick persons had kissed. The warning enabled us always to avoid what might have been a serious difficulty.

Out of our perplexity as to food, there seemed no opening, and as to our towels and other purchases patience was the only course, though a telegram sent by the first boat to Sordavala, whither some tourists in the crowd were returning, would perhaps help to recover them. We returned with the pilgrims to another holy place, where there was one portion so holy that no women might venture there.

Our way lay through a pine-grown island, and a sturdy-looking Russian woman told my friend she should like to walk with us.

"I have been shut up in hot Petersburg all the summer, and here I come for a holiday, and find only a pack of old women who can't walk. Let me come with you."

She then attached herself to me, and began groaning over the heat of the day, and sighing under her imitation sealskin, and then over her heavy goloshes. I could understand her, as her gestures were as many as her words, but I had no torrent of speech myself in which to reply, and finally she moved on.

Just then we reached another chapel, and before

it was a table, I thought, of relics wrapped in silk. But I was soon undeceived. It was the "robing-room," and the same priest as before enveloped himself in full canonicals in the eyes of the waiting public.

The music was worse still here, and we rested at some distance from the chapel. When service was over, our guide offered to row us back, but suggested that we might like the lovely walk of three versts home through the wood. So we and a few others took this path. Glad we should have been of food at once, but we had to explain that tealess, sugarless, and breadless were we. Might we buy something? Could we have eaten the buckwheat porridge we should have been boarded free, but this was beyond us, and we were grateful when we were told we might buy holy bread before it was consecrated, and that tea and sugar could be purchased through Alexander.

Alexander was a delightful person. He had been a soldier's servant, but happened to be out of work for the season, so he thought he would spend a few weeks in this quiet place, where, if there was much church-going, food was good, and

work was light. His work for us certainly was not heavy. We knew not who had last slept on the two cribs in our cell, so we carefully spread covers over them, and used our own pillows and rugs. There was nothing else in the room but three chairs, a table, and a stand for hanging clothes. The public washing-room for women pilgrims was in front of our cell. That I could not stand, and fortunately I possessed a crock, such as we had noticed at the last guest-house, and we were fain to use this, and what water we could spare out of the samovar we got from Alexander. One night he suggested we should like a fire in the stove, and this really was glorious. We kept our windows open, but the blazing logs aired the room from the ever-present medley of odours, and vapours of oil and pilgrims.

We went several times to the chief church, which is a miracle of colour—red, white, blue, and gold. The incense was a relief, and must, to a certain extent, be hygienic among these heterogeneous crowds of pilgrims. We noticed that the prostrations, sighs, and groans of the worshippers were not in any way in strict connection with the service.

PROCESSION AT WALAMO.

There was in them a certain devotion which had nothing to do with the ceremonial. Each individual came there, not to attend the service, or hear sermons, or listen to the music, but because his or her burden, or want, or care, needed to be brought to God's house. Prayer, confession, or praise, or the mere desire to express religious feeling, occupied the men or women who prostrated themselves passionately, touching the ground with the brow. Groans and sighs were the result, not of special portions of the service, but of inner feeling. Now and again one part of the service might bring some knees to the ground, and move some hands to sign the cross, but though the congregation were united by the fact that they were worshipping, the bond that comes from the use of a familiar liturgy did not seem to form an essential part of the service.

My friend, or would-be friend, the deaconess, who had remained behind for a day at the chapel on the farther isle, when she returned, was much pleased to meet us, and wanted to take us under her wing to see the abbot. But, unfortunately, he did not " receive " on the day she had fixed for us,

so we did not visit him. I was not altogether sorry, for I did not like his looks. He is young for his position, which he has only held for a few years as yet. He is red-haired, and has not a refined or intellectual face. But I am certain he must be a very practical man, with great powers of organisation.

"He is so busy," said bright-eyed Peter, aged seventeen, a lay-brother, who amused us much. "He has to see to the building which is going on. He is seldom in church." Peter was also of a nature to prefer business to church, and envied him. At all events, when sent out with us, Peter pleaded that he was in no hurry, for if we liked to remain out, he had already had five hours in church. We could fancy Peter a handful at home, and it appeared that his father allowed him to move about pretty freely. He came from the neighbourhood of Petersburg, and knew David Davidowitch ("the English gentleman who cured eyes") quite well. He had worked in the great Government iron factory close to that gentleman's house, and was fluent on the subject. Indeed on what subject was he not fluent, this bright, sunny-natured lad?

Why was he a lay-brother? Oh, well, after changing his trade once or twice, he thought he would like to see all sides of life. Of course he must be a soldier presently for a couple of years, but much as he longed to see the world in that way, he thought it was well to know what the religious life was like, and, as far as he could see, it was the best kind of life for a man. Perhaps, he thought certainly, he would come back to it after soldiering. To us it seemed most unlikely. The lay-brethren, he said, pass through the place like water through a sieve. Some come for one reason, some for another. Sometimes a great noble comes for a spell of quiet under that garb, and there were two or three such among the holy fathers, but very few.

If one can judge by bearing and countenance, high birth is not largely represented among the permanent brotherhood of some two hundred members. The lad was told to take us to see some of the hermitages. He had also business of his own, viz., to fetch milk for Sunday, when the fast would be over, and more food be allowed to pilgrims and guests.

The hermitages were prettily situated. Down by the bridge is a broad stone, and on that stone each spring a wild duck builds, and will sit patiently and trustfully there, consenting to have her back stroked by the pilgrims who visit the holy hermits. Indeed all these islands are the homes of birds and wild animals who have no fear, and who are fed in winter, and preserved in summer. There is no danger to them, and the only enemies that they know are their fellows. Man has no terror for them. Wild birds of every kind flock to the place where no gun is heard, the more so that Ladoga is one of the resting-places for birds of passage, which yearly frequent its waters. Fox and lynx are also found here, but wolves and bears are, I believe, not among the habitués, though Ladoga, when frozen, is dangerous on account of its trackless immensity, its snowstorms, and its wolves also.

Peter introduced us to one hermit, and ran off to the farther house to salute the second, who was aged, but so holy and good, that the lad said all who saw him loved him. Certainly the hermit we saw was so noble-looking that we asked for his blessing, which he gave in word only, and not in

HERMITS AT A GRAVE.

orthodox style; perhaps because we were not ourselves orthodox.

However futile it may seem to us to spend apart lives which might have been actively spent for the good of others, these grave men, living on herbs and water, and rarely seeing their fellow-creatures, have gained a certain noble simplicity, which is very impressive. One can well imagine a spiritually-minded man, if he found in the monastery but a miniature world, with passions and ambitions rife in the community, with a good spice of mammon striving for wealth (albeit for the monastery), or for power for the individual, would turn very sad at heart, not finding then what he had sought. And so the memory of the "holy men" is not altogether without its teaching. They turn from the world to the monastery, and from the monastery to God. Still, the discomforts and horrors to which they subject themselves, are not in keeping with our notion of what is well-pleasing to Him, and it is again with a sigh we think of what good work such noble men might have done, if they had but remained "in the world," yet "not been of it."

Peter had not yet got his milk, so we went back to an island, where we had already been, to find the cows not at home. Now they had come back, and as a lay-brother was already busy, Peter was ready for fun, which he would not have ventured upon if he had had to milk the cows. "Come along," he said, urging us to land, and we, having heard the fame of these women-fearing cows, went cautiously up to the gate. A mild-faced cow gazed at us reproachfully for a moment, and then promptly turned tail, and fled. A terrible commotion took place, and the lay-dairy-brother yelled at Peter to take us away, as he could not milk, and there would have been a dangerous stampede had we stayed.

In Sordavala, when people buy these ecclesiastical cattle, it is almost impossible to have dairy-maids for them, as they allow no woman to approach them. The original breed were brought over by Peter the Great, I believe, from Holland. They are chiefly black, with white marks, and are very handsome.

Peter showed us the steam-dairy, the crocks, which are all made in the islands by the brothers;

and expatiated on the energy and resource of the community, which is almost entirely self-supporting. Of course money comes from the rich merchants of Petersburg, who trust thus to secure heaven's blessing, and much also comes from the pilgrims. Once, in the year 1892, they had 3000 pilgrims in three days, and there were several hundreds when we were there.

We were weak enough to go and see the pilgrims eat, but came out as soon as the closing of the refectory reading gave us an opportunity.

Later in the day we were stopped by an old woman, her daughter, and her grandchild. Her daughter had heard I was English and asked, did I know an English lady married to a gentleman in Finland? She had been in their service, but could not tell where they lived. She had liked them so much, but "this poor miserable sinner (meaning herself) was so dull—may God forgive her—in a strange land, where no one spoke her language, though every one was kind, that she had to go away." Of course I did not know her friend, but when once we had made the inquirer's acquaintance we often saw all three.

Another woman, who had first spoken to us in the church, was also, perhaps, more talkative than was quite agreeable, for nothing would make her realise I could not understand her. She laid her head on my shoulder, and chattered, looking into my face.

On the last day we saw all the hermits assembled in church, a touching and interesting sight.

We were almost sorry our plans took us south to Petersburg, for we had greatly enjoyed our stay in this quaint and curious place.

CHAPTER XVII.

HELSINGFORS.

My visit to Petersburg has nothing to do with Finland, and therefore has no place in this book. Another city, which I went to early in my sojourn in Strawberry Land, claims our attention instead—Helsingfors, the modern capital of Finland.

I did not expect to stay long there, for town life after London has no great attraction for me. I did not want to see sophisticated life, but the simple, national life of the people, and their beautiful country. Yet I passed almost as many weeks there as in wandering about. It is above all things a cosmopolitan little place. Every one is kindly, every one willing to help. Every one is grateful—which seems comic, and is very pleasant—that a stranger should take any interest in the doings of the nation. Intelligence and brightness characterise

the inhabitants, and it is rare to come across a really stupid person. The very servants seem well-informed, and the air breathes education. English, French, and German are very commonly spoken, and any one who knows a foreign language is very willing to speak it. The only language my friends avoided was Swedish, and therefore I did not progress rapidly in the accomplishment of speaking it.

It would be difficult to find a town of 80,000 inhabitants in England so clean, so bright, with such museums, libraries, and public buildings. Even Bedford is not as educational as Helsingfors, nor is Brighton so well provided with social amusements—concerts and theatres.

Organisation and the critical faculty are well-developed qualities among Finns. The one quickly and thoroughly sets the wheels of an undertaking going, the other is always on the outlook for improvements. Everything is done as though by a workman who sets about his work with understanding, knowing what is wanted, and how best to do it. There is very little blundering, and hence, though there is little money, what there is goes further than in some other countries.

Helsingfors is built on rock, and from this point of view has an advantage over Petersburg. which is built on a bog, and is therefore unhealthy. The public buildings in the Russian capital, moreover, are always apt to sink, on account of this uncertain foundation, and the floor of St. Isaac's Church seems to be perennially under repair. Russia has to get her granite from Finland, and a good deal of her grit in another sense comes from that country too, for many of her best naval officers and military men were born in this sturdy Switzerland of the North.

The two countries are as different physically as they are morally. You can run a plough without meeting with a stone from the Black Sea to Archangel, through soil which needs little cultivation to make it prolific. Yet agriculture in Russia is not brought to any great pitch of perfection, for Russian financiers prefer stimulating by protective duties the manufactures of the country. It is easier thus to have on paper a visible, though fictitious record of national prosperity, than to add to the material welfare by the more laborious but permanent method of improving the soil.

In Finland, on the other hand, where man has had to contend against every difficulty Nature could devise, there is a highly civilised method of agriculture. It is not on English, or even Scotch lines, it is true, for after striving to adopt many foreign ways, the practical Finn finds that he must study his own climate and soil, and make his own system accordingly.

What is true of these physical contrasts is true also of the psychological leanings of the two nations. The bright, chatty nature of the Russian peasant finds no counterpart in Finland, except in East Karelia. There the poetic and artistic nature comes to the lips of the peasant, but in a different mode of utterance from the conversational merriment of such lads as Russian Peter at Walamo.

In Helsingfors itself the various Finnish types are a good deal modified by foreign influences, and one should hardly go there to study national character. The capital is, moreover, rapidly extending its sway over the country, and the gradual diffusion of Western ways and Western ideas must modify to a great degree the Finnish

types which are so curious a survival of the little-known Finno-Ugrian races.

As Helsingfors is situated on a strip of land running out into the Gulf of Finland, most of the streets have a view of the sea at their far end, and there are rocks and trees to frame these views, so they are very pretty at every season of the year.

The climate of Helsingfors is said to be the worst in Finland, for the raw damp of the winds there contrasts unfavourably with the dry cold of the country inland. But when this has been admitted, and a protest entered against cobbles, there is nothing but praise left for the little city.

Electric lights and telephones abound, postal arrangements are good, trams and sledges, or, in other seasons, carriages, are cheap. Amusements are plentiful, restaurants and cafés numerous, and the shops are attractive. Lodgings are not dear, but, on the whole, living in the city, *in comparison* with the country, is very expensive. For foreigners the best arrangement is to live with a native family, and if they permit it, to have meals sent in. At a pension, the charge is about £5 a month, and

for any one who likes living *en pension* the "Pension centrale" in Alexander's gatan is convenient. Other arrangements are made by which strangers may take one or more furnished apartments, and where they may either have entirely their own food, or have early coffee and late tea sent in to them, and lunch and dine out. All these matters are settled to suit the various students who flock to the university and schools. There are women as well as men students. They wear similar caps, but this badge of studentship is not compulsory. They attend lectures together, and are on a perfect footing of equality in every respect. Of course the young people coming up from the country require good arrangements made for them, and in a great many good houses there are such lodgers. Children are also sent in large numbers to the upper grade schools for which Helsingfors is famous.

There are three large mixed schools, which are private ventures, that is to say, not patronised by the State. The girls and boys grow up together in these schools, on terms of good comradeship, and sharpen their wits one against another. There

are also separate schools for boys and girls, a Swedish, and a Finnish institution for both, under Government supervision. The girls' schools are called *Fruntemmersskola* (gentlewomen schools), and are admirably housed. Each has a very strong staff of teachers. In both there are continuation classes for ladies who wish to become teachers, or to prepare for the university, or merely to study special branches of knowledge. The seminaries are also used as practising schools for teachers. One hundred lessons have to be given by the candidate being trained and a certain number before the examiners, and these latter lessons must be given in the presence of the teacher who has instructed the pupil in the particular subject.

I was present at an admirable geography lesson on Africa, and at another, to teachers, on the Practice of Education, in which a skeleton lesson for young children on the "Slave and the Lion" was pulled to pieces, and criticised. The pupils had not only to say whether the questions, as printed, were suitable, but they had to give the reason for their opinion, and had definitely to state what pedagogic principle was illustrated or set at defiance

by a given query. They were thus taught to apply the theory of teaching, in which they had had a course of instruction. Very bright girls they seemed, and their teacher was one whose voice and gentle countenance spoke of long years of thought and experience.

Besides all the various schools, elementary, secondary, and technical, there are charitable institutions without number. Dr. Barnardo's Homes have been studied to good purpose, and it would seem there is no class of halt, blind, or indigent which is not cared for. The Home, or rather school, for cripples, where any poor lame, or maimed, or deformed person may learn a trade, is a charming place, and one that might well be copied.

Ingenuity and marvellous fertility of resource characterise the Finn, and certainly the way in which it is made possible for the one-armed to crochet, the hump-backed to work without pain, and the legless to sit to their employment with ease is quite wonderful. Where a cripple has learnt a trade, the Home still sells whatever work he or she likes to send.

The People's Palace, even, has its imitator at Helsingfors; and Fröken Trygg, who has but a few pounds of her own a-year, by indefatigable energy which nothing daunts, has established this "People's Home," and made it a popular institution. In it is held on week-days the "Children's Garden," and I was delighted with the spirited, happy Kindergarten, inspired by Frau Schrader's teaching, and making a bright spot in the lives of one hundred little ones. They are sometimes washed, and always cared for by the young teachers, their sore fingers bound up, or little ailments looked after. No wonder that from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon the place is full of smiling faces. There is a mysterious cupboard, too, full of many good things, in the way of boots, shoes, and worn clothes, which may be purchased at a low—very low price. There is food, hot, clean, and good, and the children, after disposing of half-penny worth, which means as many helps as they can manage, are by turns allowed to assist in the washing up, while others sweep the floor, and set the room straight. There is plenty to learn, and besides ordinary Kindergarten work, there is the

material of the country, wood, which gives the older ones many delightful occupations.

Children are not admitted to government schools before the age of six or seven. Education is not compulsory, nor is it free, and yet there are probably fewer "illiterates" in Finland than elsewhere, for no man or woman may marry until he or she has received permission to attend the sacrament, a permission in one sense equivalent to confirmation. But this grace cannot be obtained until the candidate can read, and gives evidence of thorough instruction in religious knowledge.

In country parishes clergymen have to go long rounds to ascertain the extent of their people's acquirements, and it is on these visitations that intelligent pastors learn the ways and minds of their parishioners.

It is thus that a large portion of the folk-lore of the people has become known, and old runo singers, like the now celebrated Paraske, have been discovered. This extraordinary woman—the last of the race—knows 3200 runos, and has remembered them from her childhood. The first she learnt sixty years ago when she was three

years old. In a later chapter, however, readers interested to know more of her will find some account of her characteristics and history.

The yearly exhibition of paintings had just opened in Helsingfors, when I first went there. The private view was of course crowded by all the journalists, critics, and friends of the artists. The gallery is in the Athenæum, which is a building worthy of its high-sounding name. For Helsingfors is a city of fine buildings and grand spacious squares.

The first impression was that the art of painting in Finland was altogether on different lines from that of England, and the impression deepened and was gradually explained.

Art in the grand duchy, like education, politics, and literature, is nothing if it is not patriotic. A republic in the heart of an autocracy as pronounced as that of the Holy Russian Empire, must needs be patriotic to hold its own. In the art of painting this is eminently the case. No foreign influence is allowed to dominate the style, for otherwise it would no longer represent the country of its birth. The landscapes are Finnish, the

portraits are of Finlanders, the historical scenes are episodes of Finnish gallantry, the classic subjects are those connected with Finnish literature, the *genre* painting depicts scenes of Finnish life and occupations. And besides all this, there is also the essential Finnish style, which is neither of the English, French, Italian, or German school, though it inclines most to that of the second, and is republican to the core. Truth absolute, and delineation of nature, a broad, bold touch, dealing with fidelity rather than with tenderness, concealing nothing which is requisite for the complete conception of the idea—such are the characteristics of the present school.

The study of light and shade, of the phenomena of Nature, are the principal points which attract the attention of the artist, and in some instances with marvellous success, for the light on the countenance of the chief figure in "Stockjunkare" is quite dazzling in its brightness. This large picture by Pekka Halonen is an illustration of a novel of that name by Jacques Ahrenberg, the distinguished Finnish writer, and represents three figures round a timber fire. The whole scene is graphic, and

full of life and character, all the light converging in the face of the powerful countenance of the central figure. As it was hung in the exhibition, this beauty was strongly marked, the light from the window streaming in upon it and irradiating it with lifelike brilliancy. In any country the painter of such a picture would attract attention, and here he is considered a rising artist. The strength and vigour of the picture redeem it from the charge of roughness, which in England might be urged against the broad and unfinished nature of the artist's manipulation.

Exquisitely finished, on the other hand, is Edelfeldt's Wilhelm v. Schwerin, an illustration in black and white for the national work, 'Finland in the Nineteenth Century,' which has now appeared in English. The tale of the gallant boy, whom death claimed at the early age of fifteen, while fighting for his country, is pathetically told, and the details are all minutely worked out.

Yet another picture by the same artist, in quite a different style, shows Paraske the Runo-singer above mentioned. Those who can recognise genius in other art than that of their own country,

will some day admit that besides the wonderful sculptor Wallgren, whose magnificent "Christus" is here photographed, Finland possesses really great painters in Gallen Järnfeldt and Edelfeldt.

There were no less than three portraits of Paraske in the Helsingfors Exhibition. That by Edelfeldt represents her in the attitude of inspiration, seated alone, with her seer-like eyes beholding in the lonely landscape that which to less gifted sight is all unseen. She looks beyond the present into the eternity which knows neither past, nor present, nor future, but is the illimitable in which genius dwells, and knows no death. The picture is one that must live, as it is wonderful in expression and atmosphere. Both the other portraits of her are by Järnfeldt. One shows her with a little kanteler, or musical instrument, something like a zither. In this the singer is an old woman, a relic of the past, and her songs, if they come from her feeble lips, or ring from her touch, are sure also to be echoes of the far distant past. It is a "sorrowing song" she is singing; she seems to be saying, "Few and evil have been the days."

THE THORN-CROWNED CHRIST BY WALLGREN.

Again, in an unfinished picture the same artist depicts her leaning on the wooden cross of a lowly grave. Here, too, sorrow and loneliness are the theme, and the Runo-singer is merged in the frail and aged woman whose whole heart has gone out of her singing, though the song of sadness still sounds in her breast.

Perhaps Järnfeldt's Paraske is the better outer likeness. Edelfeldt seems to have aimed at picturing the soul—success in which is not given to every portrait-painter.

Of landscapes, Järnfeldt had three snow-scenes, which excited great admiration, as they presented successfully what few artists attempt—the various effects of light and shadow on snow, especially on melting snow.

What really does give a wonderful picture of Finnish life, its toil and hardship, is a picture of "Sved" burning, by the same hand. The peasants are firing the forest land, in their accustomed manner, as described in the Kalevala (canto i). Having done this, they sow their seed in the ashes. Ground thus prepared will yield a plentiful crop for three years, or four seasons, and then

grows up again into brushwood and forest. The artist has chosen typical peasants, and the charm of the scene lies, not in the beauty of the faces so much as in the pathos, and the silent lesson.

Finland owes to these patient toilers, these peasants whom Nature's hardness never daunts, the extraordinary productiveness of the bog and moorland, which they have converted into seed-bearing fields.

There is almost as great a craze in Helsingfors for societies as in England, and I went to several interesting discussions. Women's rights have a very large number of upholders. As far as I understand the matter—and it is not one that has ever agitated my soul, for personally I have every "right" I desire—what the women of Finland wish for is the liberty to aid the poor, and helpless, and ignorant in the best possible way. Of political "rights" I heard nothing. One of these discussions, however, seemed to have a somewhat opposite tendency, and the deaconesses were rather hardly dealt with. Years ago, at a church congress in England, at which I was present, the same discussion had cropped up, and it amused me to find

that the question of dress even at Helsingfors had much to do with the matter.

But, at all events, during the famine time, in the winter of 1892–1893, the kind friend whom I have so often mentioned as travelling with me, set an example of what woman has a right to do. Going to the far north, almost to the border of Lapland, she gathered the starving children into a shelter, fed and clothed them. Of course she had a friend with her, and England may be proud that the friend was an English lady resident in Finland. Money was collected right and left, food was sent up and warm clothing, not only there, but to other centres immediately formed whence once the way had been pointed out. The thermometer in that fearful cold showed over thirty degrees of frost—Celsius. The distances to be travelled across the snow in open sledges took from six in the morning till late at night. But if these ladies had not braved the cold, the fatigue, and the possibility of rousing a bruin from his winter slumbers under the snow, many a poor family would have vanished from the face of the earth. My friend showed me afterwards some of the bread used,

though it could hardly be called by that honourable name. In the "famine cupboard" of the museum I again saw varieties of it, and understood at once the proverbs, "Go not to the larder, when the bread is in the bog," *i.e.*, of moss, "nor to the cook-shops when meal is in the fir-tree," *i.e.*, bark. The bog-moss is baked for bread, and sawdust is kneaded into dough. A charitable firm, Messrs. Epps of Bristol, sent 1 cwt. of cocoa, but it was considered that it would realise more money sold for the benefit of the starving people than if itself transported so far north, and a most valuable gift it proved. In the particular district I speak of, some fifty children were collected into a shelter. Very shy and untaught the little things were, quite unused to civilised life and discipline. Of course food and warmth came first, and then cleanliness and teaching. Of the forty children who survived the bitter suffering they had gone through, many were so civilised by the end of the spring, when they were sent home, that the parents were astonished. What touching letters those parents wrote—now several together signing a round robin, now one or both in a family despatching an

epistle! If God sends another famine, may there be many women who hold it to be their right and privilege thus to help the destitute!

There is one infringement of women's undoubted "rights" which it is to be hoped may soon be amended in Finland, and that is that their property is to a great extent in the hands of their husbands. Something has been done to ameliorate matters, but even the wife's earnings are still not under her own control.

Social entertainments in Helsingfors consist chiefly of coffee-drinking about 12 o'clock, and small dinners at 4 o'clock. Calls of ceremony are made between 12 and 3, but friendly or intimate visiting may take place after 5.30 till 7. Society has three broad divisions: a Russian circle, of which I saw nothing, except at a few public places, and from what I observed there I do not fancy that the cultivated Russian of continental society is to be found in this capital. Secondly, Svekoman, or Swedish society, which contains many families belonging to the old *régime*, those who, when the Russian governor in old past times did entertain, formed a sort of upper circle. Among

such families there still lingers a delicate polish and suavity of manner, which is not handed down in the more Radical portion of this section of the community. Frank, bright, and with a touch of genuine kindliness, society as at present constituted has the "*bonne camaradie*" of a republic, rather than the polish of a court. Lastly, there comes the Finnish society, delightful in its hearty kindliness, its generous appreciation, its literary energy, enthusiasm, and determination. In fact, in education, commerce, and literature, the Finnish capital is the most go-ahead little place imaginable.

Of local amusements I did not avail myself greatly. I heard the Russian gipsies sing, and saw their wild and serpentine dances. I listened to the music of Tschaikovsky, the Russian artiste who died recently of cholera, and was bewildered by the clash of sabres, and the songs of birds, and waving trees, which mingled in his compositions. The university hall, in which the concert took place, would have been a splendid music-room had the original design been carried out. But a Czar, on seeing the plan, said it was too large for

so small a nation, and drew his pen through half, which just spoilt its proportions.

I was remiss in one thing—I did not go to the theatre to hear or see Madame Ahlberg, the great Finnish actress. She is determined to conquer Europe, and in the Finnish tongue; every one agrees that she has extraordinary powers, and was born to succeed. She has however since married a German prince.

The University, the great church of S. Nicholas, the Library, the "Archives," the Ridderhus, the house where the three other estates of the Landtag meet, and lastly the Senatehus—all these are fine buildings. So are the Athenæum and some of the museums. The contents of those museums it would take archæological treatises of many volumes to describe.

There is one feature of Helsingfors life which strikes a foreigner as distinctly good, though curious. I heard of no cases of "nerves," or hysteria, or "revolting daughters." Parents have perhaps in some instances tried to keep their girls at home, but money is scarce, and occupation is plentiful, and every girl claims her right to make

her own way in the world. There are, it may be, some four or five unmarried ladies without a profession, but they are mostly engaged in charitable works. "*Ennui*" apparently does not exist—possibly a reason for the non-appearance of the ills referred to above! There is no line drawn which makes it difficult for a lady of high birth to earn a living. You may bear a title, and yet be a governess, a bank-clerk, or a reporter. You may even be in a shop. You are just as much in society, if you belong to it by birth, as if you sat in your drawing-room all day, doing nothing.

The foreigner must be prepared for a certain amount of questioning. It is the Finn's way of acquiring information, and is generally meant in a very kindly, cheery sort of way, to show their interest in you and your concerns. Before the Russian conquest, a writer, passing through Finland on his return to England, noted this peculiarity, and foretold the development of an intelligent race. Such the people of this nation pre-eminently are, and for fear my English readers should confuse the Finlander or Finn with the typical Lapp, let me add that in Helsingfors the

specimens of the former race are, in cultivated society, not at all unlike ordinary Europeans. The Swedish type is perhaps taller and larger than the Finnish. The women are as a rule taller than the men. The broad face and bridgeless nose of Eastern Finland are little seen in Helsingfors.

There are at least three distinct types of character, speaking roughly, which the traveller sees in Finland. The Swedish influence has affected the whole western coast, and has made itself felt even on the hardy peasant from *East Bothnia*, who is quarrelsome, often drunk, but intelligent and hard-working, and makes an excellent workman.

Tavastland has a population of stolid, grave, enduring, and determined peasantry—faithful servants and plodding workers. The *Karelians* are a bright and song-loving nation, full of music, lithe in movement, and devoted to exercise and excitement. Slow, certainly, when it is a question of settling about a thing, but once awakened, life kindles into action. They and the Savolâks, their brethren, to whom the bridgeless noses chiefly belong, know a good horse when they see

one, and are devoted to their own jolly little animals.

To the *East*, Russia has impressed her influence on this race, but it has not yet crushed in them their love of song.

When I arrived at Helsingfors, the evening star was not visible, and sunset was not until towards midnight. But I stayed on and on, till the star of night looked into my windows at 3 P.M., and the sunset made the sky like a glory of summer roses. Snow, which generally waits till after Christmas, had been on the ground for more than a month. Sleigh-bells had become familiar music, and I had grown used to the thermometer's being several degrees below zero. I learned to love the honest folk, and long for the snow to harden, that I might practise snow-shoeing, and then for it to go, that I might travel once more.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN IDEAL TRIP.

If friends of mine had only a short time in Finland, I should advise them to take the trip I went with Madame Neovius, the wife of the famous antiquarian, in the month of June 1894.

We started from the quaint town of Borgå, memorable in history as the birthplace of the Landtag, when established under the first Alexander. Its fine old cathedral, its consistorium, its many-coloured, many-shaped wooden houses, its hills, now town-clad, now draped in foliage of the ever-present fir ; its river, ice-bound in winter, and in summer bright with puffing, panting penny steamers, and crowded with pleasure-boats, fishing-craft, and larger vessels ; its fairy islands, where summer is a perpetual holiday, and its sixteen schools of various kinds, well maintained by the

population of 4000—all remain in my mind as a picture too pleasant to be forgotten, and linked with memories of kindness which can never be repaid.

We left together, on pleasure bound, Madame Neovius to see the home of her childhood and her first home after marriage, and I to visit at the same time Paraske, the wonderful singer.

We determined on economy, and practised it in the discomfort of a third-class carriage full to overflowing with the members of six nationalities. The tongues present were English, German, French, Russian, Swedish, and Finnish. Peasants were making merry over scant fare. Students, men and women (the latter adorned with flowers from friends who had seen them off, after the pretty custom of the country), were discussing the glories of the first of June, when many of them had won honours at the great gala day of the University. A patient from the great nerve doctor, Westerlund, of Stockholm, was trying to get some rest, and babies and children were sleeping or crying in every direction. I was oblivious of everything, and only delighted to stretch my limbs when, after passing Viborg,

we reached the wayside village of Galitzina. It was Sunday, and we wanted to get to Sakkola in time for church. We knew of no resting-place between our start and our goal, so, getting off after a very slight meal, we drove on and on through endless miles of moor and forest.

At first the fresh wind made us wrap the light furs we had with us warmly round us, but about eight o'clock the sun was so powerful that I had to choose between scorching my face, or spoiling my head-gear. So, choosing the latter alternative, my shady black lace hat, with its fresh roses, was unrecognisable in a few hours: the lace was brown, the pink roses were white; but still the wind remained cold.

We had the good luck to see an elk and her calf —a rare sight in Finland now, though, since killing these creatures has been prohibited by law, they have returned to some of their former haunts.

At several of the wayside inns where we changed horses, we came on groups of women returning from church. The men go, but separately from the women. Such colouring as those groups gave to the dark pine forests would have rejoiced the

heart of some of our rich colourists. It struck one all the more in coming from West Finland, where sober black is the festive garb. Here every woman's dress was an artist's palette, and from the yellow shoes, variegated stockings, brilliant skirt, many-hued apron, to the contrasting jacket and gorgeous head-kerchief, not two articles were alike in colour.

It was late in the afternoon when we passed through Walkeala village, and beheld the blue waters, that surpassed in brilliancy even the matchless sky above, and dazzled the eyes, as it rolled against the exceeding whiteness of the strand, from which the *white* village perhaps takes its name.

Very clever are these border folk, Finnish to the backbone, and exceedingly skilful with their hands. They are famed for the light-wheeled carts, which are much used in Petersburg, but because they are of Finnish make, the paternal government of Russia lays a heavy tax on them, as it does on all things made out of Russia. So the Finns never dream now of *making* the carts in Finland. Like the stones of Solomon's Temple, each piece is made, measured, and finished at home, and then

taken across the border, put together, and sold untaxed. Thus are ridiculous and unnecessary laws evaded.

Onward we went some miles yet, and reached a small inn kept by Greeks. I knew now that I was in Karelia—Southern Karelia—where every man is an artist born, and every woman has that mysterious charm which lends grace even to the most unkempt Irish girl, and has probably inspired more poetry fresh from the heart than all the charms of the most peerless queens of fashion that have ever had lyre attuned to their praise.

Here we paused and ordered tea and food, for we had fasted all day. There was a bridge to see over the falls of the Vuoksen, but, except as a means to cross the rapids, the bridge did not attract me. Close at hand I espied a salmon-netting place, and picking our road through swampy ground, we found our way to a fisherman's house, whence silver coin of the realm lured the freshest salmon I had ever tasted, just out of the river, and cooked before our eyes. Even the sour bread seemed sweet, the milk was cream, the butter of the purest gold ; and there we sat, above

the roar of that wonderful waterfall, the trees sheltering us from the wind, and the snowy table-cloth laid on the grass, speaking of the housewife's thrifty work. The fisherman's dog kept us company, and the kindly cows cropped near us, wondering at the stranger folk, while the master of the house smiled and talked in a quiet determined voice which was musical, and suggestive of a just, but very resolute rule.

There is an old encampment in the neighbourhood, so I inquired if coins were ever found, and I was led down to a cottage where several were said to be kept. Unaccustomed to the Sunday evening costume of men and women in their somewhat low-necked bodices and short petticoats, and men in thin white linen clothes, it was only after sitting awhile, and noticing others joining the women on the settle, and the men in the inner room, that I realised I had not, as I thought at first, disturbed them in a preparatory disrobing. It is the custom to gather thus in the chief houses of the village on Sunday evening, and a very quaint custom it is. They make a regular Quakers' meeting of it in the absolute division of men and

women. Doubtless there is a rivalry of gossip, and no doubt, as in some places nearer home, club talk outrivals drawing-room scandal.

The coins I obtained were not valuable. The best thing I found was a flint and a tinder-bag. We came back to the inn followed by crowds of children, for I had some sugar-plums in view for them, and these proved irresistible.

We found we were too late to reach Sakkola that night, without disturbing our friends after bed-time; so, as I could not keep my eyes open, we determined to try the spotless beds, and I slept in perfect comfort until three the next morning, when we were to be called.

What a lovely morning it was when we started again! We passed the turn to Petersburg, and felt that we could be there, if we liked, in five hours. How tempted I was to enter the Russian capital in the primitive Karelian cart, with our peasant driver, our sprightly little pony, and our rustic attire! But we resisted, and took a by-path through a dense forest, where the insects were extraordinarily numerous. Beetles, ants, and flies surrounded us in every direction, and the solemn

woods opened out here and there, framing visions of the blue waters we had now to cross, and making one think of the glorious beauties which lie behind the tangled, gloomy paths by which we pass to happier regions.

My friend even found the road rough, and I, for my part, always preferred walking to driving when I did not delay the journey, and here the pony could only go at a foot's pace, so we got out, and progressed as nature originally intended for many versts, till the wood opened on a sandy slope, and the Vuoksen lay at our feet.

We crossed in an open boat, though had we been five minutes sooner, the most fussy, noisy, and important little intruder into these peaceful scenes, in the shape of a steamer, would have taken us across to Sakkola in a very few seconds.

As we stayed, and had tea at the grocer's shop, the news that the former curate's wife and an English lady were come, spread like wildfire. Paraske, who had come over to prepare the parish for our arrival, flew down the hill to embrace us. The rectory was ready to receive us, and we found the doctor and his wife calling there ; the apothe-

cary, we found, lived there; the "lady from the cottage on the bridge," who was the best-known person in the village, came to view us; and the post-mistress and her sister, the other clergyman of the place, and a lady from the banks of Ladoga, all spent the day more or less with us.

We visited the poor folk, bought odds and ends of quaint things, drank two cups of coffee or tea at each place we went to, basked in the glories of the wondrous summer night, and generally enjoyed ourselves for two days. Then came farewells, and invitations to return and visit Ladoga when we were next in the neighbourhood.

Off we went in that same dwarfed specimen of a steamer, and passing the most enchanting scenery, and picturesque groups on the piers waiting to join the boat, we came at last to the head of a fierce rapid, and a hideous stretch of flat country covered with bogs. Up the sandy bank we scrambled, to see our prospective conveyance a few feet in the air behind the frightened Karelian pony, who seemed unfamiliar with the smoke-vomiting monstrosity which we thought so absurdly small for a steamer.

There was a good road round the bog, but our

driver knew best, so at least he said, and drove straight over the quaking morass he called a hay-field, and then through what might have been the bed of a Himalayan watercourse, mingled with the mud of the Stygian pool. We begged humbly to be allowed to get out, for though one wheel of the cart was high in the air on ponderous stones, the other was sunk in a bottomless slush. Thus alternating the poise of the wheels, we moved slowly on, clutching at the rails, and wondering where the next jolt would land us, in the filth, or crashing against the stones. "Have faith in me," said the driver, and certainly either he or the pony found the way safely enough.

There was Paraske at last, gesticulating to us, and half into the cart she scrambled, and then, with many embraces, led us over clean straw into the log-hut where she had passed her life.

Months before I had heard of her fame as a bard of note, almost, if not quite, the last of those repositories of ancient song who embalm in their memories the unwritten literature of their race. I had heard that she was then living in a pastor's family in Borgå, and that he was writing down the

3200 verses she knew, and the tunes she sang them to—monotonous chants, chiefly in minor keys, which sound weird and ëerie to a degree.

PARASKE.

I had knocked at the pastor's house, and, after an interval of kindly hospitality, here were I and his wife, Madame Neovius, with the singer in her own home. The boards were scrubbed to perfect clean-

liness; the stove occupied some six feet out of twelve. A bunk-bed in one corner, a settle and a table, such was the accommodation. We had brought provisions—salmon, tea, sugar, bread, etc., and she was generous in her poverty.

Curiosity in the village knew no bounds, and *how* the thirty or forty women found standing-room I cannot tell; but first they came with their children, and passed out after grave salutation; then they returned, and stayed, and Paraske lit the fire to make tea. It was nearly 10 P.M. The heat was fearful, for neither of the panes of glass, called by courtesy a window, would open.

"Paraske," I called, nearly beside myself with want of air, "ask them to dance."

Away they went, and presently, in a very large unfinished barn, the women danced. Now and again a man, lured to the place by the sound of music, crept through the empty window-frames just as he came from the fields, his horse's halter round his neck, the reins and bells in his hands, and his great boots on. When a break came in the dance, or a figure intended for men, in they joined, and once a regular Scotch sword-dance was

exquisitely executed—minus the swords. Instrumental music is never used there for dances, nor does Paraske use it often in her songs, so the Kantala introduced into her picture was inappropriate.

We had promised the women tea. It was two o'clock when we were allowed to go back and dispense it. The red glow of sunset, which had gleamed like a fire over the Vuoksen when we went to the dance, had died away, and it was daylight. Just as Paraske had put two boards together, and a shake-down of hay for me to lie across the settle, a sleepy yawn came from above the stove. Her little grandson had been forgotten, and was waked up by our movements. He clambered down into his grannie's arms.

Six o'clock found us stirring, for the same bright-eyed lad was at our door, and Paraske not far behind. Then the people began to assemble again, and I bought embroideries, silver brooches, magic stones, and flint instruments, till a somewhat serious village quarrel arose, and included, or rather centred round Paraske, of whose prestige as an entertainer they were envious. But as the

dispute began about some stolen property of hers, and as in our presence she almost charged the suspected girl with the crime, we thought it best to carry our hostess off on a long day's outing that the bitterness might have time to subside.

So we went, on foot first, but farther on we chartered a cart, and came to a turn where we again felt inclined to invade Petersburg, for it was barely eighteen miles away. But we went on, through woods where the *Linna borealis* was beginning to waft its sweetness, and the birds warbled wild rhapsodies of song. We visited some more primitive people, bought dresses just off the loom, and had a most refreshing dinner off fish, and eggs, and creamy milk and coffee.

On the way we had visited a Russian family, and then we determined to send our things back that night, for Paraske gave a broad hint that gipsies from the Russian border were about, and a report of our having money with us, might lead to accidents, as they occasionally knocked people over the head in the night, and robbed them.

There were happily not many hours of darkness, and, as we were to hear the women sing their

wedding and other songs, we did not get to bed again till late, and started off at six to visit our friend on the border of Ladoga. We had then the opportunity of seeing a storm on that majestic lake. The custom-officer's boat, launched to pass a vessel trading along the coast, was tossed like a cockle-shell in the gigantic waves, and had to put back again. The larger vessel rolled and staggered, as the waves broke over her, and seemed hardly able to breast the storm. I noticed the sand of the shore simply alive with lady-birds. I asked if there were any hops in the neighbourhood, and was told yes, they flourished there, and so the "bugs" were in their glory. Perhaps some enterprising Englishman will try the virtues of the country round Ladoga for this somewhat uncertain crop.

The damp air of Ladoga is not to my liking, and I got chilled to the bone. Either that, or the unusual food, the constant coffee-drinking, and the jolting of the cart, made me unable to proceed on my journey. We got across a ford, and it was then evident I could go no farther.

At first our search for lodgings was fruitless, but at last a very hospitable family gave me up a large

room, where I remained prostrate for two days. I was rather surprised at the attentive kindliness of our host, who looked in on me every hour or so. I learned afterwards that I was so crimson with fever that he thought I had the small-pox, and as a case was being nursed in the family bath-house, he was well up in the symptoms, and how to nurse a patient. Certainly the strong odours of carbolic with which the place was washed down were very reassuring.

Madame Neovius was here visited by a poor woman for whose son, in an evil hour, she and her husband had become sponsors. "Screeching Aino" she was called, and with good reason, for her piercing voice reached the room where I was, and when my friend thought to shelter herself in my room, in pressed the "screecher," followed by "the boy," who was shown off as a prodigy, and repeated in gasping accents the various religious passages he had had dinned into his white pate. Surely such a lad would do any sponsors honour, if only he were properly educated, and sent to a really good school! "Screeching Aino's" husband had outdone Henry VIII., for she, having managed

to survive him, was his seventh wife! It is generally considered a terrible thing to marry twice, and thrice is horrible in Finns' eyes, but what about seven times? Poor Aino must have been rather an outcast in the views of her neighbours.

The king of the salmon fishers lived near, but I was unable to visit him, and as I dreaded another jolting journey in a cart, we did what is rather a hazardous thing—sailed on Ladoga in an open boat. We both lay at the bottom of it, and made up our minds to five hours' sleep. But the water came in, and the boat's motion was rather unpleasant. Six hours of it we endured, barely able to raise our heads to see the lovely glittering waters, then we meekly asked, "How much longer?" "Not half way," was the answer, and upon that we took counsel. Madame Neovius cannot stand a boat at the best of times, and I felt too ill to care much what I did, if I once got to land. So we anchored off the veriest fairyland of green-sward, silver birches, alder, and fir. On this promontory was our boatman's home.

Our destination had been Konewitz, the monastery which, on an island off the coast of Ladoga,

vies with Walamo as an attraction to pilgrims. It, however, bears an evil reputation, and is not supposed, in beauty of scenery, to compare with Walamo. We were really trying to catch a steamer, but we had also been entreated to go there by a pilgrim who wanted a free passage over. He now attached himself to us, expecting that for the good of our souls we should pay his way thither, which we did.

Here we rested, and for the first time since leaving Paraske, I really enjoyed myself. We lay quite still, the few people in the place were getting us food, and the tiny children were timid and wondering, standing in lovely, unconsciously graceful attitudes, watching us with great round eyes.

Presently there came a dish of gwiniad, a fish which is considered far above salmon, and which indeed, eaten thus *al fresco*, and just out of its native waters, is a dinner for a king.

How were we to get on from that lonely promontory? Boat, my friend would not; drive, we could not, for there was only a winter road, *i.e.*, fit for sledges, when the snow covers all unevennesses.

We had ten miles to walk, our luggage being put into a hay-cart, carefully tied on, and the pony led in and out, and over fallen trees, down into ditches, and up over hillocks, while we, invigorated by the scent of the pines, the delicious fragrance of the flowers, and the magic of the forest beauty, went mile after mile unconscious of fatigue, and reached the wayside village where we expected to catch the steamer next morning, which we had missed by not going to Konewitz. Our pilgrim, staff and bundle rich in the odour of sanctity, which is the outward and olfactory sign of holiness in the Greek devotee, had turned off to another landing-stage.

The only house we could have gone to was closed. It was already 10.30, when suddenly we heard the good news that we had miscalculated, and our boat would be there in half-an-hour. Already we heard its piping signal, and in a few minutes I was hailed by the words: "How do you do, English miss?"

The captain had recognised me as having travelled to Walamo in his boat, and in another quarter of an hour, I was comfortable with a German lady, in the hospitable captain's cabin.

My Finnish friend thought the deck preferable, but turned in later.

My new acquaintance and I talked in English till two o'clock. I heard from her after I returned to England, and later still received her wedding cards, and hope to read the book she has written. She was from a château in Southern Germany, and had been staying for months in Moscow. In Petersburg she had been mercilessly pestered about her passport, and said, "What a blessing it is to be in this delightful Finland, where one can breathe without asking leave!" I must, however, own that in Petersburg (except once, when I offered to show it, on cashing a cheque) I was never, during the eight days I was there, so much as asked whether I had a passport. A friend I made later on in Finland told me that her short hair was a great disadvantage to her in Petersburg. It is looked on as a kind of enfranchisement, and dangerous student-mania.

We left the German lady at Walamo. I had only ten minutes there, so would not spoil my memories of it by a hurried visit, and returned to the boat, after seeing her into the hands of the priest.

At Sordavala we made several new acquaintances, and went on to the marble quarries of Ruskeala. There I heard a tale of horror which is probably more legend than fact. But it tells how, of a gang of men working together, two loved the same girl. Her father too was there. The men exchanged bitter words, and would have fought, when all of a sudden down came huge boulders from the quarry, covering both the girl's father, and one lover. The whole gang watching, saw the second lover just escape the same horrible fate, and heard the agonising cries of the crushed and tortured men. They could not remove the mountain of rock; no one had a gun but the uninjured suitor. "Shoot us, shoot us," implored the father and his fellow-sufferer. "Shoot them," cried the neighbours, and he shot them. Did he marry the girl? I trow not. The story, of course, lost nothing in the telling, and in the situation, and it thrilled me so, and so took possession of me, that I seemed to hear the voices echoing back, and as I passed through the wonderful enamelled meadows where the flowers ran riot in every hue, I could not help wondering whether the girl had been wander-

ing there that day, and had heard the crash, those cries of agony, and the fatal shot.

At the next stage we were hospitably received, and I was glad that my companion, the pastor's wife, desired to wander round the scenes of her childhood alone. For I was content to swing in the hammock, listen to stories of bears and wolves in the neighbouring woods, and play with the children.

After a day or two, we got into a boat, and rowed across Little and Great Järnis Järvi, two of the loveliest lakes in Finland. We were glad to bivouac in a loft, and we tramped unending miles the next day, inspecting steam dairies which send butter to England even from Järnis Järvi, and having many adventures. Then, leaving our hospitable friends much to my grief, we took to carts again, though I walked whenever I could.

Our next destination was Joensu. We started on our journey at two o'clock, after luncheon, and after going some miles saw the train steam away as we reached the station.

"Why, we might have gone by rail!" said my friend.

But of that part of the new *chemin de fer* I had heard too much; it had only reached a very elementary stage, and the engine had an eccentric way of sitting down in a bog. So I did not regret the departing train. All the day we heard that same locomotive whistle and whistle, and never get farther, and as luck would have it, it did really subside that day, and did not arrive in Joensu 'till twelve hours after we did.

We got there at two in the morning, and I then said bed, and bed only, was my destination. So we let the steamer go north without us at five o'clock, and had three very pleasant days in the town, all the pleasanter for me, because I found a kindly English or American lady there, who gave me the treat of speaking my own language. There we spent June 24th—S. John's Day. Bonfires raised on huge poles, flame all through the night over East Finland, and men, sober all the rest of the year, keep the Baptist's festival with deep libations.

Thence we drove through another glorious summer night to Kuopio, where I was eager to visit Mina Canthe, the great play-writer of Finland.

That night's drive I never shall forget. The

birds, even, were singing, but the flowers and trees slept, though darkness was far from the world, and the light, more tender than sunshine after rain, swathed the forests, lakes, and moors in a mystic, poetic beauty.

Next day I broke my fast as a necessary preliminary, and then went at once to knock at Mme. Canthe's door. It is a shop on one side; she has a good store of haberdashery, of kinds such as you might find perhaps in a country village. The Finnish mill-woven print I bought there was immediately seized upon when I brought it home, as a charming summer dress. The lady herself is charming also, and in her own little sitting-room she writes the plays that stir Finland deeply. She is as much of a Socialist as she can be in such a country, where Socialism is wisely kept under, both because the labour class needs no crusade there, and because, if a breath of Socialism were to sully the irreproachable conduct of the nation, it would at once give Russia an excuse for interference.

Mme. Canthe's most famous work, of which she kindly gave me the MS., is written in Swedish, not

Finnish, and dramatises a more or less true story. A young girl marries her guardian. He treats her lovingly, as a spoilt child. She, never dreaming that she is running into danger, teazes him to let her have her own way, and invite a boy-friend, whom she had not seen for a year or so. She falls in love with this young man, and, irritated by her husband's absolute trust in her, gives the latter, in a momentary impulse, some poison which he keeps in his desk.

The principal scenes are laid in the prison, where, as a murderess, she is kept, and they culminate in a terrible one, in which the man she loves tells her he is going to be married. She goes mad, though all along her conduct has been that of a monomaniac. The moral, is the careful working out, all through the drama, of the way in which uncontrolled impulse leads imperceptibly from spoiled innocent childhood, to unprincipled womanhood—from crime to madness.

There is perhaps no higher proof of the intelligence of the Finnish nation, and of its mental vigour, than the freshness and originality of its literary work. Much of the "inspired" writing of

the people comes from the perennial fount of thought, which arises even in the peasant class. It is the offspring of the inner life of the nation, and is not bred of foreign or unnatural conditions of local life. Even when a little tinged with northern melancholy and introspection, it is the melancholy, not of discontented pedantry, but of nature—of forest, lake, and moor—a melancholy that buries its heart in the mystic communion with nature, an introspection which rises, through that very communion, not as a selfish, idle pastime, but as an entrance through the study of one human mind into loftier understanding of what Nature has to reveal in her silent teachings, her parables, her ever-recurring lessons.

Want, privation, cold, and loneliness have struck deep into the soul of the Finn, and hence he has drawn a lofty endurance and noble strength which will enable him to do good work, as well in literature and in art, as in those paths of political wisdom and heroic self-restraint, which are the best auguries for the future of his beautiful and beloved land.

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